



California gets ready for an El Niño winter: sandbags, levees and coastal repairs (Oct. 9, 2026)

Public paper · October 9, 2026 · Weather desk · California · Ryan Standley / Record of Sale, LLC / Notice Nearby

With forecasters warning of a strong El Niño winter, California has staged 4.4 million sandbags, 52,000+ feet of portable flood wall and 400,000 tons of levee rock at 68 sites, is inspecting 1,600 miles of state levees, and is fast-tracking coastal repairs from Carlsbad and Malibu to Ventura and the Bay Area, the governor's office said Oct. 9, 2026.

California state agencies are getting ready now for what forecasters say could be a very wet El Niño winter, the office of Gov. Gavin Newsom said Friday, Oct. 9, 2026. The work follows an El Niño emergency proclamation the governor signed on Sept. 21.

The state says early signs are already showing up: higher sea levels from ocean "Kelvin waves" and big surf from Pacific hurricanes have already pushed water onto parts of the coast this year.

Below is what the state says it has done, and which counties are named. Each named county has its own short Notice Nearby brief linked at the bottom.

Flood supplies and levees

Supplies staged: The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has flood-fight materials at 68 sites around the state: 4.4 million sandbags, more than 52,000 feet of portable "Muscle Wall" barrier, and 400,000 tons of rock for emergency levee repairs.

Levee checks: Crews inspect all 1,600 miles of levees in the State Plan of Flood Control each fall, plus weirs and bypasses in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys up to the Oregon line. DWR crews were clearing debris near the Colusa Weir in Colusa County in September, and the Tisdale Weir rebuild in Sutter County is under construction.

Dams: DWR told dam owners statewide to get ready for heavy rain. Its Division of Safety of Dams inspects every high- and extremely-high-hazard dam each year. Cal OES reviews dam emergency action plans.

Local help: DWR is running more than a dozen regional preparedness workshops for counties, cities and levee districts.

State Water Project: Annual maintenance is done on the system that serves 27 million Californians.

Saving stormwater

DWR has a “Recharge Readiness” webinar series, and the State Water Board has two workshops in late October to help local agencies get permits to send floodwater into groundwater basins. Since 2019 the board has put more than \$329 million into stormwater projects able to catch over 48,000 acre-feet a year.

Twain Harte (Tuolumne County): four stormwater projects finished in 2024, including a 5,000-gallon rain tank at an elementary school.

South Lake Tahoe (El Dorado County): the 320-acre Tahoe Valley stormwater greenbelt was finished in September 2026.

South Gate (Los Angeles County): the Urban Orchard Project, helped by an \$8 million state grant, was finished in 2025.

Lookout Slough (Solano County): added more than 40,000 acre-feet of flood storage in the Yolo Bypass.

Near Wilton (Sacramento County): Cal OES approved more than \$390,000 to repay emergency Cosumnes River levee repairs from the 2022 flood.

The coast

The Coastal Commission can act on qualifying emergency permits within 24 hours.

Carlsbad State Beach (San Diego County): State Parks is repairing the Tamarack parking lot and shoreline after summer swells stripped sand.

Malibu Pier (Los Angeles County): a \$2.125 million emergency contract, paid from the 2024 Climate Bond, will repair pilings so the pier can reopen before winter.

Surfers Point (Ventura County): the Coastal Conservancy put \$16.2 million into phase two, moving infrastructure inland and restoring dunes.

Bay Area: BCDC is moving shoreline projects such as the Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot (Santa Clara County), Restore Hayward Marsh (Alameda County) and the interim Highway 37 flood protection project.

Forecasting and command

DWR is using forecasting tools from the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at Scripps, and Cal OES has opened a modernized State Operations Center in Mather to coordinate disaster response.

Notes

- Original source: Office of Gov. Gavin Newsom news release, Oct. 9, 2026 — <https://www.gov.ca.gov/newsroom/>
- Notice Nearby left out a political passage in the release about federal budget proposals.
- Notice Nearby is a Public Register listing, not a newspaper, and this page is not Legal Publication. If the agency and this note disagree, the agency wins.

County briefs: <https://noticenearby.com/briefs/ca-colusa-el-nino-winter-storm-prep-2026-10-09>,
<https://noticenearby.com/briefs/ca-sutter-el-nino-winter-storm-prep-2026-10-09>,
<https://noticenearby.com/briefs/ca-tuolumne-el-nino-winter-storm-prep-2026-10-09>,
<https://noticenearby.com/briefs/ca-el-dorado-el-nino-winter-storm-prep-2026-10-09>,
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<https://noticenearby.com/papers/california-el-nino-winter-storm-flood-prep-oct-9-2026>