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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Melissa Figueroa - (916) 445-3545

Twitter: @ca\_trans\_agency

Blog: [www.calstablog.wordpress.com](http://www.calstablog.wordpress.com)

**Edmund G. Brown Jr.**  
Governor

**Brian P. Kelly**  
Secretary

## Winter is Coming

### *Quick Facts about Caltrans' Seasonal Preparations 2015*

SACRAMENTO—Winter weather is on the horizon, and Caltrans is going above and beyond their usual preparations to ready our infrastructure for what could be a wild season. The motoring public needs look no further than the [Tex Wash Bridge washout](#) on Interstate 10 in July, or the massive mudslides on Interstate 5 earlier this month to know these preparations could prove crucial in the face of a potential El Niño. Below, please see some of the work that is underway as California girds itself for what may come:

#### **Standard Preparation:**

- Caltrans Headquarters Maintenance requires each of the 12 districts to provide a Winter Operations Plan addressing issues such as, snow and ice removal, rock slide mitigation, and resources available to respond to emergency situations on the state highway system.
- Maintenance crews patrol for potential rock slide areas and install rock fencing where necessary.
- Clear any loose debris from slopes in recent fire/burned areas.
- Clean/clear drains and culverts to ensure proper drainage.
- Order winter weather gear and personal protective equipment for workers.
- Ensure salt, sand, cinder, chemicals and brine are fully stocked in housing facilities and containers.
- Maintenance is in process of hiring approximately 800 temporary employees to assist with winter operations statewide.
- Ensure that our communication equipment, highway cameras, and the satellite video system (CT SAT COM mobile communication) system are operational and ready for deployment.
- Calibrate equipment used to apply deicing and anti-icing chemicals and abrasives to ensure proper application rates.
- Ensure adequate stock of flags and signs for traffic control operations.
- Review and repair bridge scour.
- Tree and brush grubbing.
- Increase pump house inspections.
- Ditch cleaning.
- Crack sealing.
- Monitoring reservoirs for potential overflow that would affect roadways (working with state and local water agencies).

- Contract in place to install storm water counter measures.
- Bridge scouring has been identified and reports updated.
- Identify, inspect, repair pumping stations. Pumping stations are ready with backup generators in each region in case of emergency power outages. All pump houses are inspected to ensure they are in proper working order. Many of the pump houses are located in low-lying areas.
- Ready snowplows, making sure sanders are up and running, and inspecting trailers.
- Various equipment checks and repairs.

### **Extraordinary Preparation This Year:**

#### *Fires:*

- Districts affected by wildfire have been attending winter prep county coordination meetings set up by Department of Water Resources as well as preparing for debris flow in our burned areas.
- The Department also been clearing and checking dams – some of which have been impacted by high levels of sediment due to hillside erosion from fires – applying hydro-seeding and straw to slopes to eliminate or reduce erosion.
- Inspections of recently burned areas due to forest fires have been looking at erosion control and notes of possible remedies taken.

#### *Storms and Floods:*

- Drain, drop inlet and culvert inspections, tree health assessments, identifying potential for slides, felled trees, flooding, pump house inspection, repair and maintenance.
- Making sure maintenance yards have adequate fuel supplies on hand.
- Emergency expense card holders have been identified within each District and are versed in the process of requesting additional spending authority and increased limits from an emergency force account if required due to an emergency.
- Preparing Emergency Response Plan to heighten awareness and improve readiness.
- Updating Geospatial Information System databases and viewers to improve and enhance real-time information sharing.
- Appropriate professional staff and engineers are identified and tasked with emergency response.
- Caltrans district meetings emphasize the need for timely information to reach the public and the media. These meetings include the distribution of updated Maintenance supervisors, after-hours call out lists as well as key phone numbers for senior management, construction engineers, traffic management, maintenance field crews and public affairs so they may be easily reached in the event of a major incident.
- Collaborated with the National Weather Service (NWS) and San Jose State University's [Mineta Institute](#) to discuss El Niño effect and emergency preparedness procedure and best practices.

- Partnered with NWS to provide predictive weather forecasts (5-7 day forecasts) daily so Caltrans can better prepare for storm events and major weather changes throughout the state.
- [Caltrans District 5](#) conducts a meeting in the northern and southern portions of the district each year before the rainy season to discuss winter preparedness for any highway closures due to heavy rain or flooding. These meetings include senior maintenance region managers, engineers who specialize in landslide repair and staff from the storm water unit. Also in attendance at these meetings are all of the area maintenance supervisors and their respective highway workers.

*The California State Transportation Agency is responsible for transportation-related departments within the state: Board of Pilot Commissioners, California Highway Patrol, California Transportation Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, High-Speed Rail Authority, New Motor Vehicle Board and Office of Traffic Safety. For more information, visit [www.calsta.ca.gov](http://www.calsta.ca.gov).*

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