



NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Social Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael Weston
Ranesh Maharaj
(916) 657-2268

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Millionth Drought Food Package Distributed to Family in Fresno County

Sacramento – Today, the one millionth drought relief food package was delivered to a family in the small town of Mendota in Fresno County. Fresno County is one of 29 counties in California that has suffered high levels of unemployment or underemployment resulting from the drought. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) started the implementation of the Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) in 2014 as a part of Governor Brown’s \$687 million drought relief legislation.

“From box one to box one million, this food has been distributed to the tables of families affected by the drought,” said CDSS Director Will Lightbourne. “Since the program began in May of 2014 we have provided food for more than 60 million meals in households across California.”

A food box contains nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food, to supply food for a household of four people for about five days. Food items include canned fruits and vegetables, soup, peanut butter, rice and beans. These pre-packed food boxes are assembled in Sacramento by a team of hard-working employees provided to Foodlink through a partnership with Loaves and Fishes, a local homeless shelter.

The drought relief shipments are sent by the California Emergency Foodlink to food banks in counties with exceptional drought status which show the most severe need based on farm employment data and unemployment data. The Governor Drought Task Force (GTF) designated 24 counties as the most drought impacted. This was based on three criteria: 1) the USDA Drought Monitor designation as “extreme” or “exceptional”, 2) an agricultural employment share above the state average, and 3) an unemployment rate above the state average. The 24 designated counties are: Amador, Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, San Benito, San Joaquin, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba. In early 2015, the Legislature added Imperial, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Riverside and Ventura counties to DFAP and funded the program through June of 2016.

In addition to drought food assistance, families and individuals who are expecting long term impacts of the drought are offered information and assistance in applying for the CalFresh Program. CalFresh is a federal program designed to help families add to their food budget to put healthy and nutritious food on the table. Please visit www.calfresh.ca.gov for more information.

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 25 percent – visit SaveOurH2O.org for ideas about how to conserve, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.

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