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Lake Shasta's receding water levels highlight California's need for water.

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Schwarzenegger to declare drought state of emergency

By SAMANTHA YOUNG

Associated Press

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Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's office says he will declare a state of emergency after three years of below-average rain and snowfall in California.

The drought has forced farmers to fallow their fields, put thousands of agricultural workers out of work and prompted conservation measures in cities throughout the state.

Schwarzenegger spokeswoman Lisa Page says the governor is expected to sign the proclamation Friday afternoon.

The order will direct state agencies to provide assistance for affected communities and businesses.

Three dry winters have left California's state- and federally operated reservoirs at their lowest levels since 1992.

Federal water managers plan to temporarily cut off water this March to thousands of California farms. The state has said it probably would deliver just 15 percent of the water contractors have requested this year.