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## **Warm Weather will Inundate Reservoirs with Snow Melt**

By Tihanna McCleese

How you see the effect of the warmer weather we're getting and the above-average Sierra snowpack depends on your perspective. In relation to a glass of water, some people will look at the situation as half-full. On the other hand, if you've experienced flooding in years past, then you may look at the glass of water, in relation to the snowpack, as being half-empty.

Fox40's Tihanna McCleese talked it over with water experts. "At this point, we don't see it as a problem, but there is always the risk," said Pete Lucero, spokesman for the Bureau of Reclamation. Pete's agency manages the input and output of water from reservoirs. He says there's a lot more snow in the mountains than normal right now, river levels are high, the water is unseasonably cold, and with warm weather finally settling in; what does it all really mean?

"If we see several days of warm weather we will see increased inflows that we have to manage," Lucero said. With more snowpack in the system, we will likely see more water runoff coming down in the way of inflows. According to California Department of Water Resources Hydrologist John Ericson, the snowpack is currently more than 200% of average. But even though water output at the dams are considerably higher for this time of year and several of them are operating at more than 90% storage capacity, Lucero and Ericson are confident the Bureau of Reclamation is doing a good job of balancing the in-flows to reservoir releases. Here is why water experts are so optimistic:

- Based on long range weather forecasts, experts don't believe there will be enough consecutive hot weather days to melt the dense snowpack all at once.
- The warm weather is increasing water demands for agriculture and urban uses thus creating even more storage space in the reservoirs.
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Smaller reservoirs like the Dam still must be closely monitored. Right now its releasing water at 7,000 more cubic feet per second than average. During a normal year this water would be passing through a power plant but as of Tuesday, three gates were open and water was being cascaded from top to bottom. The dam is being emptied to make sure there is enough flood reservation space within the reservoir to cap any inflows and protect downstream communities. There is flooding in Yosemite National Park but unless Sacramento experiences temperatures above 95-degrees for five or more days in row, the experts say there is minimal risk for flooding.