



U.S. investigating need for new fees on imports

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THE GARDNER NEWS

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Snow drought presents climate stress test



ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLY MAHAFFEY/USA TODAY NETWORK; GETTY IMAGES

Low snowpacks bring worries about water, wildfires

Alejandro N. Flores
Boise State University
THE CONVERSATION

Across much of the Western United States, winter 2026 was the year the snow never came.

Many ski resorts got by with snow-making but shut down their winter operations early. Fire officials and water supply managers are worried about summer.

Where I live in Boise, Idaho, temperatures hit the low 80s Fahrenheit in mid-March. The same heat dome sent temperatures soaring to 105 F in Phoenix.

Ordinarily, water managers and hydrologists like me who study the Western United States expect the mountain snowpacks to be at their fullest around April 1. Snowpacks are natural reservoirs of water that farms and communities depend on through the hot, dry summer. Their snow water equivalent, meaning the amount of liquid water in the snowpack, is seen as a bellwether for water supplies.

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A recent assessment of drought conditions from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Integrated Drought Information System suggests 2026 will be a tight year for water supplies.

MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES



A key concern is whether the historic snow drought is setting up the West for a bad fire season. That's still an open question. JEFF TOPPING/GETTY IMAGES

Changes coming to Gardner Academy for Learning

Stephen Landry
The Gardner News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Citing reduced enrollment and an increase in local graduation rates, school officials have announced that the Gardner Academy for Learning and Technology (GALT) will be incorporated into the Gardner High School campus.

In an April 14 email to the community, Dr. Mark Pellegrino, superintendent of schools, said the reorganization of GALT would take effect for the upcoming fall semester.

"The Academy was conceived to address Gardner High School's high dropout rate," Pellegrino wrote. "At that time, almost one out of every ten students were dropping out of Gardner High School. However, (the school) has made significant progress since then."

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Iran pledges retaliation for blockade

Christopher Cann,
Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

Iran on April 15 vowed to retaliate against the U.S. naval blockade by halting all trade in the Persian Gulf region as an intensifying standoff threatens to upend a delicate two-week ceasefire between the warring nations.

Ali Abdollahi, leader of Iran's joint military command, warned that Iran's military will block shipping in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Red Sea if the United States does not end its blockade, the country's state media reported. He said Iran will view the continued maritime restriction as a violation of the ongoing ceasefire and will respond with force.

More than 10,000 U.S. service members are involved in the blockade, the latest move in the U.S. campaign to pressure Iran into opening the Strait of Hormuz and making a deal after initial

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