

What Others Are Saying



“The water system in California was designed for a world that no longer exists,” he said. “The hot's getting a lot hotter, the dry's getting a lot drier and the wet's getting a lot wetter.”

[Governor Gavin Newsom, Mar 2024](#)

Improved Infrastructure Needed

“We need to be able to capture and store water when it's available, and then we have to reuse that water, and we have to be more efficient across the board. I don't think of it as an either-or; we have to do all of it.”

[Karla Nemeth, director, California Department of Water Resources, Mar 2023](#)

“California has experienced two of the worst droughts in our state's history in the last decade alone. While we've invested billions across the state to become more drought resilient in light of this new reality, there's more we need to do to prepare for the next drought, whenever it comes.”


[Wade Crowfoot, secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency, Jan 2024](#)

“California does indeed have a water supply problem, mostly because its political leaders for decades have failed to expand the state's water infrastructure that had been built during the mid-20th century... the issue that must be resolved by reallocating existing supplies, building new storage and/or creating new supplies, such as desalination of seawater.”

[Dan Walters, opinion columnist at CalMatters, Jan 2024](#)

“The specter of drier dries, and preparing for wetter wets, should be guiding our decision-making process at this time. How do we capture more rainwater? How do we capture more snow melt? How do we convey more water across different areas of the state? How do we store more of it into the ground? Although it's being alleviated right now, scientists agree that the drought condition that we're in probably isn't going anywhere. A 21st-century infrastructure solution has to begin at the governance and investment prioritization standpoint... We need to rethink what a 21st-century water infrastructure framework looks like, one that meets the needs of different parts of the state and different communities.”

[Matt Horton, senior adviser at the Milken Institute's Center for Regional Economics and California Center, May 2023](#)



“Projects that capture available precipitation, stormwater, or floodwaters to recharge depleted groundwater basins need to be ready to capture high flows when they are available during each wet season.”

[Karla Nemeth, director, California Department of Water Resources, May 2023](#)

“Building resilience against extreme weather will take time but that just means we need to work fast. And yes, it will be costly, but spending now to prepare for very wet and very dry seasons will cost far less than having to pay for future disasters. In May, Gov. Newsom proposed nearly half a billion dollars for one-time flood relief, but consistent, long-term funding is needed.”

[Peter Gleick, senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, Jan 2024](#)

Climate Change and Worsening Conditions

“We do know that climate change is altering California’s weather pattern and is likely, though not certain, to mean less snow and more rain, as well as wider swings in overall precipitation. That should persuade officialdom to create more water storage capacity to both capture runoff for later use and protect communities from disastrous floods.”


[Dan Walters, opinion columnist at CalMatters, Jan 2024](#)

“Climate change is throwing California’s already variable climate for a loop, supercharging the extremes of drought and flood and leaving us with fewer “in-between” moments. But while we’ve done a great job preparing for increasingly frequent and severe droughts in California, our infrastructure and institutions remain woefully underprepared for the extreme floods that are coming our way. It’s time to take this threat seriously, and accelerate planning for the wet years we know are bound to happen. The need is urgent... California’s water supply and flood infrastructure is not up to the task of adapting to increasing climate volatility...”

[Letitia Grenier, director of the PPIC Water Policy Center, and Ellen Hanak, senior fellow with the PPIC Water Policy Center, Jan 2024](#)

“There are areas like California or South Africa or the western coast of Australia that simply do not have enough water to go around and climate change is going to make that all the worse. It’s going to heat things up, which means that we will have more water evaporate, but we will also need more water at the same time...”

[Barton H. “Buzz” Thompson, professor at Stanford, Jan 2024](#)



“You can’t extrapolate from one region to another, but you can clearly map the fact that we are depleting [water] faster than we are accreting... you’ve got to intervene.”

[Felicia Marcus, fellow at Stanford University’s Water in the West Program, Jan 2024](#)

“Atmospheric rivers and bone-dry droughts are like earthquakes and wildfires — challenges Californians have to face. We know they’re coming; we just don’t know exactly when or where. An earthquake-resilient house or a more flood-resilient community won’t stop the ground from shaking or the rain from falling, but it can mean the difference between weathering the storm or cleaning up after a disaster.”

[Peter Gleick, senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, Jan 2024](#)

“Today we have an infrastructure from last century that wasn’t built to withstand the intensity of today’s storms, nor the increase in runoff from both paved over landscapes and denuded hillsides and mountains due to more frequent forest and development.”

[Kurt Schwabe, professor of water economics and policy at the University of California, Riverside, Feb 2024](#)

Weather Whiplash Worsens Water Supply Challenges

“Current media reports have been telling us to expect a wet El Niño weather pattern this winter, but whether or not that occurs, everyone who lives in the state knows that dry years will return. No matter the forecast, we must prepare for future droughts by capturing water during wet years, like 2023, and saving it for inevitable dry ones on the horizon. We need facilities to store water, especially in wet years, and we must do so in ways that deliver water to people in cities and towns, farmers who grow our food and the environment.”

[Mike Wade, executive director of the California Farm Water Coalition, Dec 2023](#)

“Dams become really unsafe with time, especially if maintenance has been deferred. We need to be especially careful in California because of how old our dams are (the median dam age is 74 years) and how geologically active the landscape is. There are some examples in the news recently of failed dams, and we definitely want to avoid that.”

[Andrew Rypel, director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis, June 2023](#)

“We should welcome the wet weather because California depends for most of its annual water supply on winter storms that roll in across the Pacific or sweep down from Alaska. Nevertheless... the state is not adequately prepared to deal with extreme weather events, especially the turbocharged storms that human-caused climate change can deliver.”

[Peter Gleick, senior fellow at the Pacific Institute, Jan 2024](#)

New Water Supply Needed

“The fact that groundwater depletion has been accelerating in such a large number of food-producing regions underscores the critical links between food and water security, and that both are at far greater risk around the world than most people realize... There’s a whole kitchen sink of things we need to be trying. It’s important for future generations. It’s important to sustain our groundwater supply so that we can be growing food for generations and generations, not just one.”

[Jay Famiglietti, hydrologist and professor at Arizona State University’s School of Sustainability, Jan 2024](#)

“Some of the rates of groundwater level decline occurring in California really are some of the highest in the world. It’s a sobering finding. We’ve got a lot of work to do here in California.”

[Scott Jasechko, associate professor of hydrology at UC Santa Barbara, Jan 2024](#)



CA Water for All is a statewide education effort seeking to educate policymakers on the urgent need for a legislative solution to immediately address California’s ongoing water supply threat. The path forward requires bringing together the water community, policymakers, and stakeholders to collaborate on ensuring that we have enough water for all beneficial uses and to support all Californians and future generations.

To learn more, visit: cawaterforall.com

