


# California's New Normal: A Call for Action

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# 2009: Our new normal?

- ▶ Driest spring on record
  - ▶ Reservoirs are at lowest levels since 1977
  - ▶ Delta continues to decline
  - ▶ Water quality and environmental laws are being relaxed
  - ▶ Economic crisis, State budget crisis
  - ▶ TIME FOR NEW THINKING, OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE
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*“For California water managers, the future is now. Climate change is already having a profound impact on water resources as evidenced by changes in snowpack, river flows and sea levels.”*

– Lester Snow,  
Director Department of Water Resources Oct  
08



# Climate Change in CA



- ▶ According to the Department of Water Resources California could lose 25–40% of the Sierra snowpack by 2050
- ▶ Sierra snowpack supplies up to 65% of CA's water.

**“Or to put it another way, though *wet* years will still occur, on average they will be *drier* than prior wet years while the *dry* years will be *drier* than prior dry years.”**

– DR Richard Seager  
Columbia University  
reprinted in DWR’s April  
2008 report, “California  
Drought, An Update.”





# The State Water Project

“The analysis shows that annual SWP deliveries would decrease virtually every year in the future (93% of future years).

These reductions would amount to a 20% reduction from current levels about one-fourth of the time, and greater than 30% in one-sixth of future years.”

– 2007 SWP Delivery Reliability Report (DWR)



Lake Oroville 2008

# The Colorado River



## Study: 50-50 chance of dry Lake Mead in 2021

Study cites warming, water use and growing Colorado River deficit

**MSNBC staff and news service reports**

updated 10:57 a.m. PT, Tues., Feb. 12, 2008

What are the chances that Lake Mead, a key source of water for more than 22 million people in the Southwest, would ever go dry? A new study says it's 50 percent by 2021 if warming continues and water use is not curtailed.




# The Bay Delta Watershed Crisis

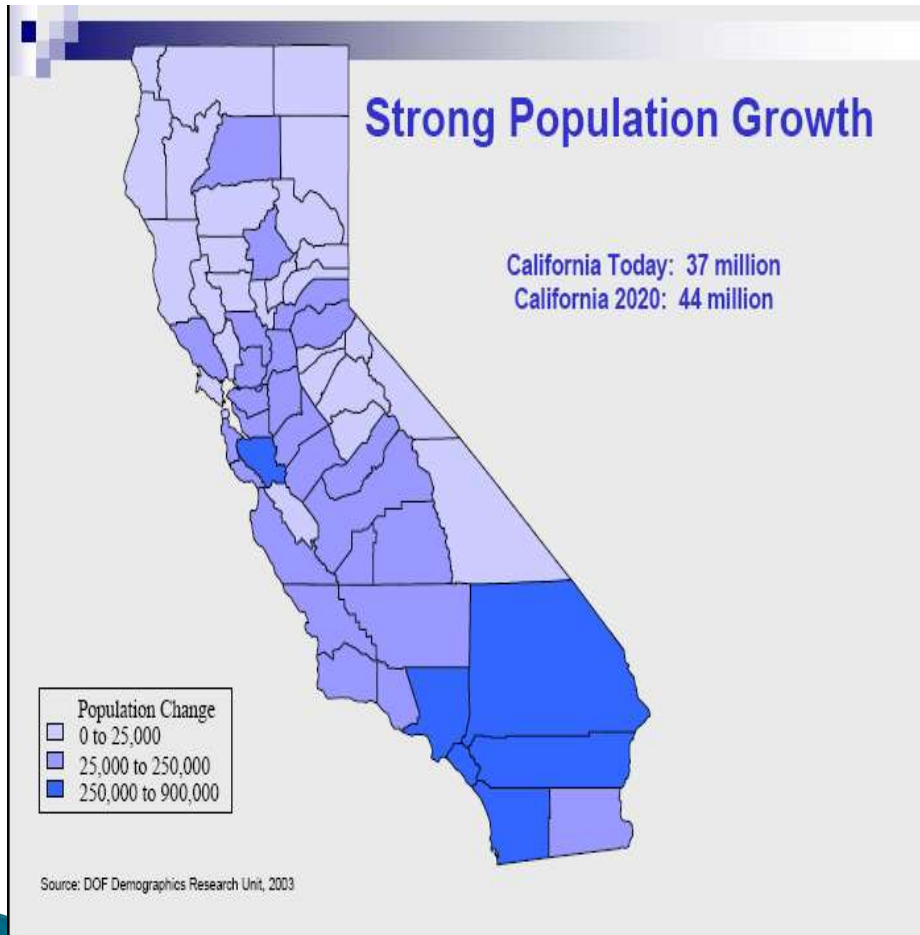
- ▶ Largest estuary on the west coast of North America
- ▶ 80% of California's salmon rely on the watershed of the Bay Delta
- ▶ Due to over pumping, invasive species & declining water quality:
  - Native Delta species are at historic lows
  - The 2008 West Coast commercial and recreational salmon fishing season was **CANCELED**





- ▶ “I don’t think the American public has gripped in its gut what could happen. We’re looking at a scenario where there’s no more agriculture in California. I don’t actually see how they can keep their cities going either.”
    - Steven Chu, U.S. Secretary of Energy
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# A Growing State



- ▶ California's population may nearly **DOUBLE** to 59 million by 2050, an increase of 23 million people (CA Dept. of Finance)
- ▶ Currently the State Water Project (dependent on snowpack) supplies water to 24 million people


# A Growing State

- ▶ At a per capita use of 184 gallons per capita per day\* the increase in population will result in the annual use of **4.74 million acre feet**.
- ▶ **That's equivalent to California's share of the Colorado River. Where will we find another Colorado River?**

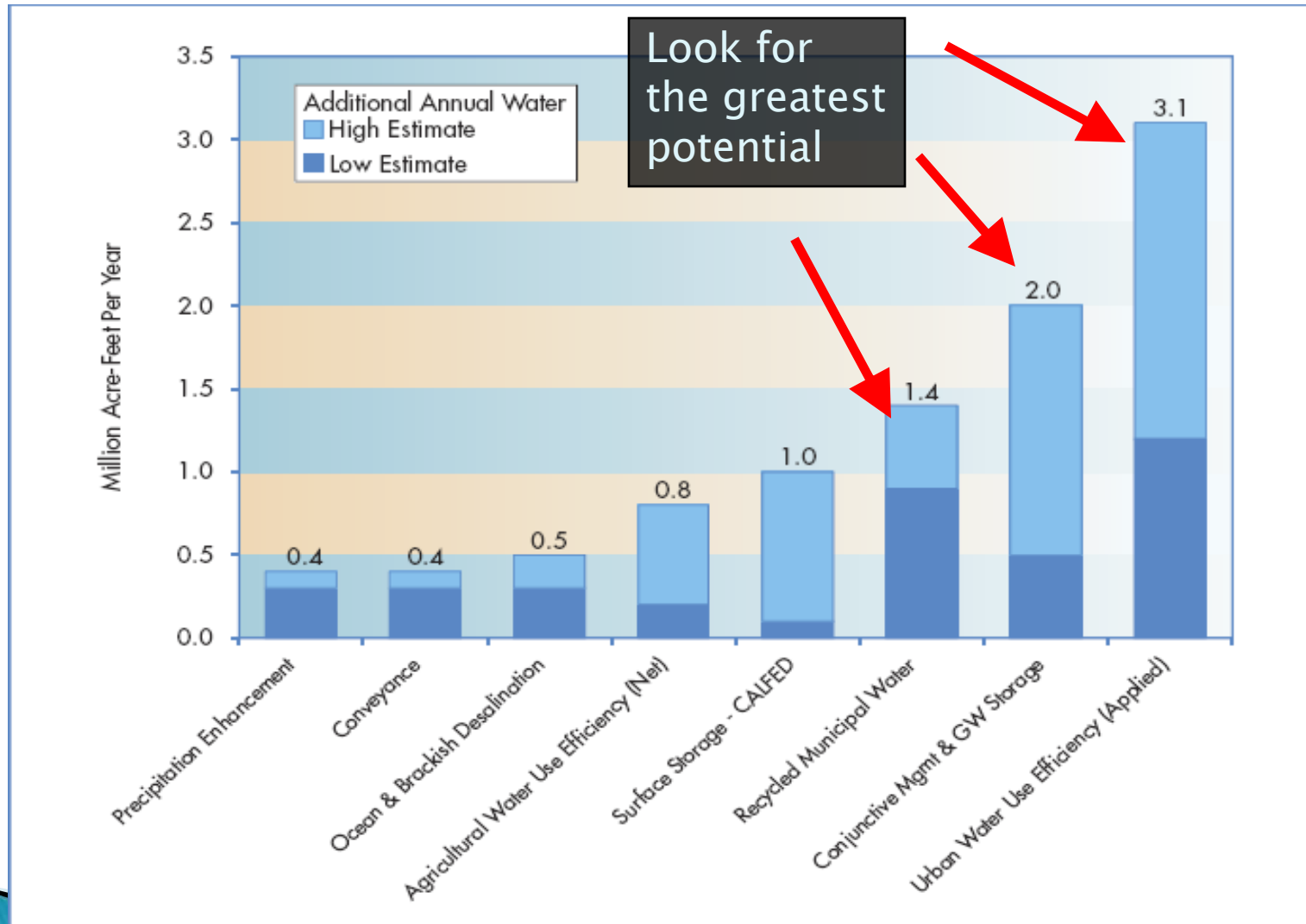
\*(20% less than the current California average of 230 gallons per capita/day)



# Facing the New Normal


- ▶ Must serve more people with less water
  - ▶ Must re-operate the system to allow for efficiency under our new hydrology
  - ▶ Aggressively develop climate-resilient water supplies
  - ▶ Reform our water governance to better balance the ecosystem and the need for clean, reliable water supplies
  - ▶ Sustainable funding
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# Where will we find the water?





# Water Conservation Tools

- ▶ Water neutral development
  - ▶ Reduced per capita water use standard
  - ▶ Retrofit on resale
  - ▶ Remove barriers to low water using landscapes
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# Water Neutral Development


- ▶ Encourage developers to incorporate water efficiency in new development
- ▶ Allow for water offset– offsite water conservation within the service area–that results in zero net demand within the service area.
- ▶ Target offsets for disadvantaged communities to ensure those communities will not be left behind.



# Retrofit on Resale

- ▶ Water agencies taking the lead
- ▶ Ensures existing housing will be efficient
- ▶ Some discussion about when to implement the retrofits
- ▶ Will need strong support to pass

## 20% reduction in per capita

- ▶ Spot bill introduced AB 49
  - ▶ Baseline is still a challenge
  - ▶ New approach may emerge
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# Recycled Water

- ▶ Orange County has targeted reuse of 49% of water that would have been discharged by 2030.
- ▶ Statewide, a similar goal would produce around 2 million-acre feet– around the historical average delivery from the SWP
- ▶ Legislators support recycled water





# Reform Delta Governance

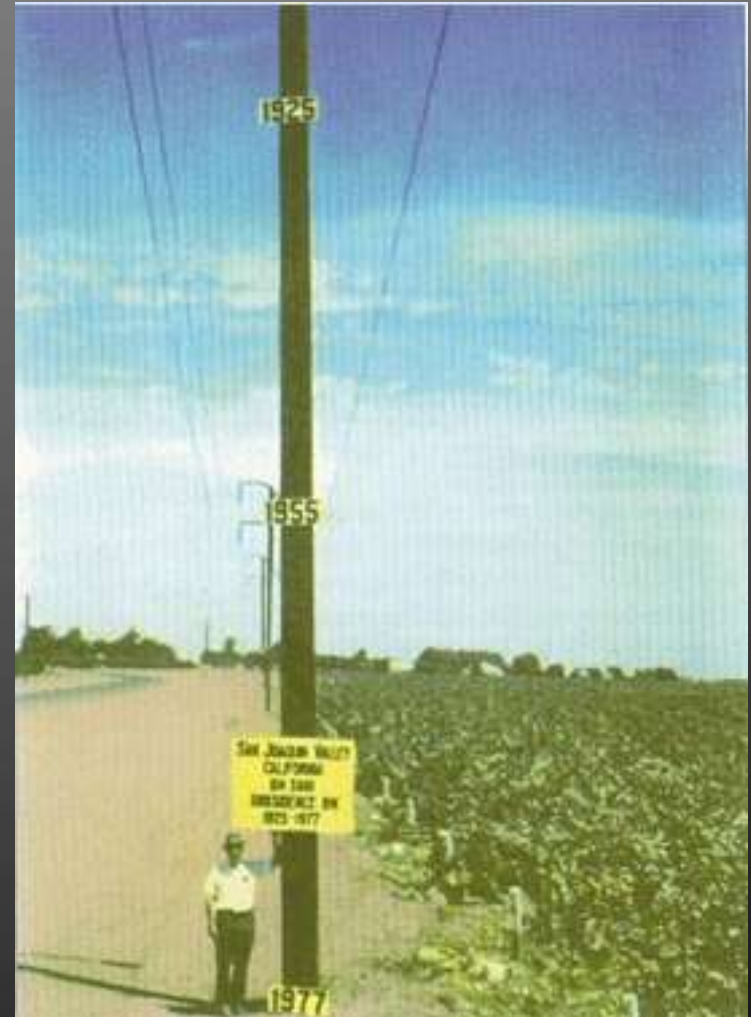


- ▶ Create governance that will better balance to co-equal goals of ecosystem health and water supply reliability.
- ▶ Sustainable funding
- ▶ Adaptability must be integrated into the new system for ecosystem & water supply.
- ▶ Ensure expectation of water is consistent with available supply



# End unsustainable water use

- ▶ Retiring 600,000 acres of drainage impaired lands would:
  - Return about 1 maf to the Delta
  - Increase reliability for other Delta users
  - Increase storage to maintain cold water
  - Stop ag drainage pollution
  - Allow for viable ag to continue



Questions?  
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