

California Water and Infrastructure Report

Formerly, the “California Drought (and Flood) Update”



For August 23, 2018

by Patrick Ruckert

Published weekly since July, 2014

An archive of all these weekly reports can be found at both links below:

<http://www.californiadroughtupdate.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDroughtUpdate>

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After the collapse of the highway bridge in Genoa, public opinion and media in EU countries are raising the question of the infrastructure safety in the EU. Although maintenance has generally been neglected and investments have cut because of austerity policies throughout the EU, the ultimate cause of the Genoa catastrophe is known by the name of “Britannia.”

In fact, although many factors contributed to the collapse of the Morandi Bridge in Genoa, we can state with high certainty that had the highway not been privatized, the bridge would be standing today.

Genoa Bridge Collapse Shows How Privatizations Kill

A Note To Readers

The jam-up by both the Congress and the Trump administration to even get anything moving on rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, let alone the quality of upgrade of that infrastructure required for 50 to 100 years into the future, is due to not only the Speaker of the House Paul Ryan types in the Congress, who said that any infrastructure program will have to be paid for by taking the funds out of Social Security and Medicare, but, also by the foolish, stupid and just damn wrong idea that a nation's infrastructure must be built by private funding. Thus, President Trump's \$1 trillion plan over 10 years is suppose to rely on private investments for \$800 billion of it. This insanity has now spread to America's space program, where the lives of American astronauts is going to be put in the hands of profit driven corporations, which will not put safety first as does NASA.

Just look at the great infrastructure projects of the past, like the Tennessee Valley Project, Hoover Dam, the Grand Coulee Dam, the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project, and many,

many more. They were all government funded, built and directed projects, mostly begun or built during the 1930s and 40s. Not only have they paid for themselves a hundred times over, but they are indispensable elements of our economy today. NASA's Apollo Project that put human beings on the Moon six times was one of the most successful projects in human history.

The quote above, on the collapse of the bridge in Genoa, Italy, makes the principled point that when one puts public infrastructure in the hands of private corporations which put profit above safety, people die.

In This Week's Report

We begin this week's report with updates on the drought, the weather, and fires. I need say nothing more here about that.

The Oroville Dam Update features a couple of nice videos.

The California Water Wars' battles have taken a dramatic turn this past week. Those battles are the California WaterFix (the tunnels under the Delta) and the *State Water Resources Control Board* plan to increase the unimpaired flows of the four major rivers of the San Joaquin River system.

First, the Trump administration may have just killed the tunnel project for the Delta. In addition, finally admitted is the fact that the price of the tunnels has now jumped to \$20 billion from \$16 billion-- a 22% increase! As for the second battle front, it appears the state is backing off of its plan to decimate agriculture in the Valley after both a mobilization of Valley farmers and farm organizations raised a little Hell, and the Trump administration weighed in. In both battles, nothing is yet settled.

Flash: Western water honchos secretly huddle on tunnels, fish

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060095217>

Californians sometimes forget that 30 percent of Southern California's water comes from the Colorado River. Not only does the Colorado River Project make a large contribution to the Metropolitan Water District of California's water supply, but the entire Imperial Valley depends on the waters of the river. The Imperial Valley provides as much as 15% of the nation's vegetables, especially during the winter. So, the threat of near-term rationing of the river's water as reported in the articles below is of serious concern to not only people of this state, but also the nation. Several articles below report this.

The following two sections are titled, "Fallout From the Tariffs" and "Infrastructure." The infrastructure section includes the entire article on the Genoa bridge collapse, from which the quote above is from. There is also an item on Ultra-High Voltage Technology.

The Feature this week is the International Petition Drive For A New Bretton Woods Conference. I shall let you read it without any further introduction to it here.

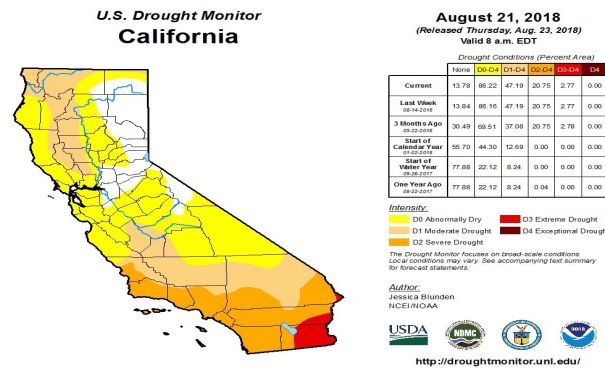
Drought, Weather and Fires

Drought continues to intensify throughout the West, including in Canada. Though California remains mostly in Moderate to Severe category. We are not where we were a few years ago in the five-year drought where more than half of the state was in the most extreme category, Exceptional Drought.

And what will the next months bring? Well, most forecasts predict little or no rain until at least October. But, we may have an El Nino visiting us about that time. There is a forecast of a 70 percent chance of that. An article below explains.

As for fires-- two points to note. The Mendicino Complex fire is now over 400,000 acres and still not under control, making it the largest fire in California history by far. Second, the discussion President Trump set off with his tweets on the California fires a couple of weeks ago is still ongoing, with some interesting articles this past week. I excerpt some below. Note especially this one: "California Wildfires: Is Global Warming Producing a New Normal? Part 1: Are CA Wildfires Becoming More Frequent?" The author is a serious scientist who does take apart some of the bullshit that generally dominates the media these days.

U.S. Drought Monitor



El Niño tries to return, could make 2018 an even warmer year

Andrew Freedman

<https://www.axios.com/el-nino-is-coming-back-forecasters-say-43f8159c-72c7-4bb2-9e5f-d369653f3bcb.html>

In the tropical waters of the equatorial Pacific Ocean, conditions appear to be primed for the development of an El Niño event, with potentially far-reaching consequences.

Why it matters: *If an El Niño does develop, even a weak one, it could influence weather patterns around the world — from increasing the odds of above-average winter precipitation in California to favoring drought conditions in Indonesia. It could also provide a natural boost to global average surface temperatures, nudging 2018 and possibly 2019 further up the ladder of the hottest years on record.*

The big picture: *El Niño events are characterized by above-average sea surface temperatures in the equatorial tropical Pacific Ocean. These elevated ocean temperatures effect the location and intensity of tropical showers and thunderstorms across the Pacific.*

- *In order to get a fully-fledged El Niño event started, though, a series of events in the atmosphere and the ocean has to take place.*
- *Wind patterns across the Pacific, for example, need to help bring the elevated ocean heat lurking in the deep up to the surface of the sea.*
- *"Westerly wind bursts" — which blow in the opposite direction from normal trade winds north of the equator — can help bring above-average ocean temperatures.*

The details: *Right now, the Climate Prediction Center is forecasting a 70% likelihood of El Niño conditions developing by fall and winter, which is when such events typically peak.*

Michelle L'Heureux, a meteorologist at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center in Maryland, tells Axios that the upcoming event — which has about a 70% likelihood of occurring by the upcoming winter — is unlikely to be as potent as the last El Niño was in 2015 and 2016. But that was one of the most intense events on record.

Mendocino Complex Fire is now 400,000 acres—more than half the size of Rhode Island

By Amy Graff, SFGATE

August 21, 2018

<https://www.sfgate.com/california-wildfires/article/Mendocino-Complex-Fire-size-largest-wildfire-Calif-13171147.php>

Twin fires burning on both sides of Clear Lake in Mendocino, Lake and Colusa counties have devoured more than 400,000 acres, scorching an area more than half the size of Rhode Island.

The Ranch Fire near Ukiah has chewed up 351,557 acres, making it the largest wildfire in modern California history, and the River Fire north of Hopland has burned through 48,920 acres. Many are referring to the pair of infernos as the Mendocino Complex Fire.

The out-of-control wildfires both started on July 27 by unknown causes and rapidly caught up to the state's previous record holder--the Thomas Fire--that consumed an area the size of New York City in December 2017.

Scientists have a forecast for the rest of California's fire season. It isn't pretty.

By Stuart Leavenworth

August 16, 2018

<https://www.star-telegram.com/news/nation-world/national/article216804745.html>

WASHINGTON

Bad news for the West: Even after firefighters have already battled [101 large blazes](#) this year, the remainder of wildfire season is expected to be hotter and drier than normal, virtually assuring there will be more destruction ahead, scientists for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Thursday.

NOAA's forecast comes as monitoring stations in Northern California show that grasses, brush and other fire "fuels" [are reaching record-dry levels](#), following a July that was the state's hottest month on record. There's also a chance that strong "Diablo winds" — like those that fanned the deadly fires last fall in Sonoma and other counties — could return in coming months.

"During August we typically don't see those events, but they can return in the September and October time frame," said Tim Brown, director of NOAA's Western Region Climate Center in Reno, Nevada

[Diablo winds](#) refer to a wind from the northeast that compresses and warms as it blows over ridge tops and down slopes. Suburban homeowners can partially protect themselves in advance by clearing brush and dead limbs from around houses. Authorities say they should also pay attention to wind forecasts, avoiding yard work — which can ignite sparks — during strong winds.

For firefighters in the West, nighttime offers a chance to contain and extinguish fires, because humidity levels generally rise then, making "fuels" less flammable.

"But if nighttime stays warm and humidity stays low, then fire behavior can continue at pretty high levels," Brown said. "This can lead to longer fires and more smoke production."

“During the last couple of decades, this trend has really taken off,” he added.

NOAA forecasters said they expect abnormally warm, dry conditions to linger this year into October and November — not just in California but the Pacific Northwest and the northern Rockies.

California Wildfires: Is Global Warming Producing a New Normal? Part 1: Are CA Wildfires Becoming More Frequent?

August 9, 2018

Cliff Mass Weather and Climate Blog

<https://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2018/08/california-wildfires-is-global-warming.html?m=1>

With major fires burning in California, the media is abuzz with stories suggesting or stating that global warming is the key driver of these big burns. Some media reports state that the number of California fires and the annual burn area are increasing and that global warming is the cause. California's Governor Jerry Brown is absolutely explicit about the climate-wildfire connection, claiming that global warming is creating a "new normal" of increased wildfires and that the population will have to get used to it.

Are these claims really true? What does actually fire data show? The truth may surprise many.

In this blog, we will consider whether the number of fires and the acreage burned in California have increased dramatically during recent years.

If this is true, we can discuss why--- it could be climate change, mismanagement of forests, change in fire suppression policy, increased human ignition of fires, people living in places they had not before, invasive flammable species, are some possibilities.

If there is no trend in wildfires, we can examine why.

Let us first consider the wildfire statistics by CALFIRE, the official group in the State of California responsible for the numbers, which suggests a very different story provided by the media and many politicians. The numbers I will show include the entire state.

*CALFIRE'S statistics show that the numbers of California wildfires over the past 30 years has **declined**--dropping roughly in half.*



*For the same 30 years (1987-2016), **wildfire area** has grown slightly, with huge transient peaks and troughs (see below). With such variability, I suspect the trend would not be significant. Final statistics for 2017 are not yet available on the CALFIRE website.*



But now we get into the real interesting questions that many are not considering. What is driving the ups and downs in wildfires? There are so many factors that must be considered, such as:

- 1. The fact that extensive fires are a natural historical part of the ecology of the region*
- 2. The impacts of a huge increase of human population, creating increasing vulnerability while humans are starting most of the fires.*
- 3. Climate change that causes warming and changing the precipitation patterns (both wetter and drier) that influence fire frequency and size.*
- 4. Mismanagement of our forests and wild areas, allowing tree and debris-choked landscapes*
- 5. Invasive and often highly flammable non-native species brought in by man (e.g., cheatgrass and Eucalyptus)*

Clearly, climate change is only one possible factor in controlling fire frequency and may not be the most important.

California wildfire prevention needs rational solutions: Sam Kumar

Sam Kumar

Aug. 16, 2018

<https://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/columnists/2018/08/16/california-wildfire-prevention-needs-rational-solutions-sam-kumar/1010382002/>

The Carr Fire in Redding, California has burned over 300 square miles and destroyed more than 1,000 homes. The Mendocino Complex Fire has scorched nearly 500 square miles and is now the largest wildfire in California history. Thus far in 2018, wildfires in California have burned a total of nearly 1,500 square miles. In 2017, wildfires burned nearly 2,000 square miles.

One of the major contributing factors is the drought. California has been in drought for several years. Water supply fluctuates. Some years, we have plenty of snow and rain and not enough in some others. Similarly, water demand varies from one season to the next. More water is used during summer as crops and landscapes need to be watered and evaporation levels are high.

Dams and reservoirs are used as a buffer to store the water and balance supply with demand over time. Increasing storage capacity is a time-tested way to protect against droughts. Yet the last big dam in California, the New Melones Dam, was built back in 1979 and total storage capacity has gone up by a mere 3.6 percent since 1979. During the same period, the population of California has increased 74 percent, from 23 million to 40 million. When you don't increase storage as consumption increases, you will more directly be impacted by drought as you don't have enough water to release during long dry periods. That exactly is what has happened in California.

Sam Kumar is the former chairman of the Washoe County Republican Party.

Trump administration promises teamwork — not more money — to reduce fire risk

By Emily Cadei

August 16, 2018 04:47 PM

<https://www.modbee.com/news/state/california/article216821710.html>

Trump administration officials unveiled a new plan Thursday to reduce the risk of forest fires, acknowledging “the urgent need to dramatically increase preventative forest treatment” that can keep fires from burning out of control.

The plan, which emphasizes state and local collaboration, was short on details, however. It does not

address politically sensitive issues like climate change, which Democrats and scientists argue is at the root of the problem, or the role of environmental reviews for logging projects, which [conservatives want to sidestep](#). And it did not address the possibility of additional funding, suggesting the burden to pay for the new efforts could fall to the states.

Perdue and a bipartisan group of senators from Oregon, Washington, Montana and Alaska touted the strategy as the “next step” from those reforms. And they suggested that greater collaboration is likely to save the government money down the road, or, at least, “get more done with the same cost that we’re expending today,” Perdue said.

Oroville Dam Update

Oroville Spillways Phase 2 Update August 15, 2018

[California DWR](#)

Published on Aug 21, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ydsQ0LnhUs>

Crews continue to place roller-compacted concrete (RCC) on the southern half of the emergency spillway splashpad. Workers also finish drilling holes into the emergency spillway concrete weir in preparation for the installation of epoxy-coated threaded dowel bars to anchor the RCC splashpad to the weir. On the main spillway, cranes maneuver rebar panels for new walls and remove concrete forms from recently finished walls.

DWR Video Goes 360°

Published: Aug 13, 2018

<https://water.ca.gov/News/Blog/2018/Aug-18/DWR-360-video>



The upper chute of the Lake Oroville main spillway during Phase 2 of the recovery effort. DWR/2018

DWR’s video team just produced [a new video](#) of the Oroville spillways reconstruction work offering the audience an opportunity to experience the content in 360 degrees.

Check out our 360-degree videos on [DWR’s Facebook page](#) or [YouTube Channel](#). Three 360-degree videos have been produced to date.

And Now The Water Wars

As I highlighted last week, the two major battles in the “water wars” now dominating water policy in

the state are the *California WaterFix* (the Delta Tunnels), and the the *State Water Resources Control Board* plan to increase the unimpaired flows of the four major rivers of the San Joaquin River system, threatening the supply of between 350,000 and 1.7 million acre feet of water annually to agriculture and as many as 6,500 jobs.

Of course, no one is addressing reality here. The conflict remains mired in narrow interests, ideologies and pathetic whining. The fundamental fact is that for the past 20 years or more there has never been even one year that there has been enough water in the state to fulfill all the needs and commitments required by the population, agriculture, and other users. And with the state population sure to grow from the present 40 million people to 50 million over the next 20 years or so, that deficit will only grow larger. What the state requires is new sources of water, which can only come from great projects like the proposed North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) and a large-scale building of dozens of nuclear-powered desalination plants. I have covered both often in these reports and will reserve a future issue to review them once again.

Well, in the last few days, both battles have taken a dramatic turn. First, the Trump administration may have just killed the tunnel project for the Delta. That is covered in the first section below. In addition, finally admitted, is the fact that the price of the tunnels has now jumped to \$20 billion from \$16 billion-- a 22% increase! As for the second battle front, it appears the state is backing off of its plan to decimate agriculture in the Valley after both a mobilization of Valley farmers and farm organizations raised a little Hell, and the Trump administration weighed in. In both battles, nothing is yet settled.

1) The Tunnels

Jolting California officials, Trump administration looks to rewrite rules for Delta water

By Dale Kasler

August 23, 2018

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/state/california/water-and-drought/delta/article217160295.html>

The Trump administration is trying a bold new tactic to bring more water to Central Valley farmers — one that could come at the expense of millions of urban Southern Californians.

In an unprecedented move, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation served notice to California officials Aug. 17, stating it wants to renegotiate a landmark 1986 agreement governing the big federal and state water projects and how they pump water through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to their member agencies in southern half of the state.

Reclamation's efforts could significantly alter the balance of power between the state and federal governments as they share control of the water that flows through the Delta. The estuary is the hub of California's complex north-to-south water delivery system.

The complicated 1986 deal requires both sides to surrender water at times from their reservoirs, to serve [Delta environmental needs](#) and other purposes. Now the feds want to keep more of their water on hand, for delivery to Valley farm-irrigation districts and other customers of the federal government's Central Valley Project, leaving less for the State Water Project. Experts say hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water could be at stake.

Meanwhile, Central Valley Project and State Water Project members are in conflict over Gov. Jerry Brown's plans to build the Delta tunnels, which are supposed to ease the estuary's environmental troubles and enable both projects to pump water more reliably. So far the big farm-irrigation districts in the CVP have refused to help pay for the tunnels, increasing the burden on State Water Project agencies.

Now comes the attempt by Reclamation to rewrite the rules on Delta pumping. Although the two sides informally have been discussing revisions for two years, Reclamation's formal "notice of negotiation" landed the same day as Zinke's bluntly worded memo on water deliveries and sent a jolt through the halls of state government.

If the feds get their way in the Delta, there would be less water for the State Water Project and its most important customer: the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which serves 19 million residents of Los Angeles and surrounding areas. That leaves state officials anxious, experts say.

Secretary Zinke issues call to action for Central Valley Project

[August 19, 2018 Maven Other News Item](#)

On Friday, Secretary Zinke issued a memo calling for specific actions to be taken within 15 days to maximize Central Valley Project deliveries, including streamlining ESA and NEPA consultations, reassessing legal interpretations, identifying infrastructure upgrades, and preparing legislative and litigation measures.

"Today, the Central Valley Project is in such a desperate state of disrepair that it cannot effectively achieve its design capacity operations without the assistance of California's own State Water Project to move water," Secretary Zinke writes.

"The State of California is now proposing additional unacceptable restrictions that further reduce the Department's ability to deliver water to Federal contractors. Our operational needs and our environmental regulations must innovate, incorporate best science, implement best practices, and produce greater reliability and better stewardship," he continues. "The time for action is now."

Secretary Zinke then directs the Solicitor, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Services to prepare an initial plan of action within 15 days that contains options for maximizing water supply deliveries, including incorporating best science into decision making, streamlining ESA and NEPA consultations, moving to construction of new storage, identifying infrastructure improvements necessary to independently operate the CVP, reassessing legal interpretations adopted to 2009, and preparing legislative and litigation measures.

After 10 days of receiving the initial plan of action, the Office of the Deputy Secretary is to provide a final recommendation for action.

The memo: <https://mavensnotebook.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/8.17.18-Memo.pdf>

Delta tunnels cost soars to nearly \$20 billion when accounting for inflation

Dale Kasler, The Sacramento Bee

Aug. 16, 2018

<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/2018/08/16/delta-tunnels-cost-soars-nearly-20-billion/1016720002/>

The estimated cost of the Delta tunnels project, Gov. Jerry Brown's controversial plan to re-engineer the troubled hub of California's water network, has jumped to nearly \$20 billion when accounting for inflation.

Tunnels backers say the higher cost reflects the impact from inflation over 16 years, not cost over-runs or design changes, and isn't expected to hurt the project's ability to move ahead.

The latest \$19.9 billion price tag represents a 22 percent increase from the estimate of \$16.3 billion,

released by state officials last year. That \$16.3 billion figure was provided in 2017 dollars.

It's disclosed in a July 27 letter to the federal government from the recently formed Delta Conveyance Finance Authority, an agency set up by the south-of-Delta water agencies that are attempting to finance the massive project. In the letter, the finance authority expresses interest in applying for a \$1.6 billion water-infrastructure loan from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in order to jump-start the long-awaited project.

2) The State Water Resources Control Board Plan

Varied interests protest California plan that strips water rights, idles farmlands

[Todd Fitchette](#) | Aug 22, 2018

<https://www.westernfarmpress.com/water/varied-interests-protest-california-plan-strips-water-rights-idles-farmlands>

California Water Board proposal to take as much as 1.7 million acre feet of water from Central Valley communities protested on Capitol steps

About 1,000 farmers, public school educators, farm employees and consumers from Tulare to Red Bluff descended on the State Capitol in Sacramento to protest State Water Resources Control Board (SCWRB) plans to force half the annual flows in several state rivers out to sea in a move purported to help declining fish populations in the Bay Delta region.

That decision was to be made the following day by the SWRCB but was put on hold at the request of the California Natural Resources Agency. Gray said he was unsure why that decision was tabled, but suspects that the political pressure and planned protest the day before the meeting might have had something to do with it.

One irony in the water board's plan includes the suggestion that affected farmers and communities can simply pump more groundwater to make up for the difference, estimated to be somewhere between 350,000 and 1.7 million acre feet of water annually. The California Farm Water Coalition estimates the financial impact to Valley communities could be over \$3 billion annually with 6,500 jobs lost as a result.

Modesto farmer Paul Wenger blasted the water board's arrogance for suggesting such a move in the wake of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a measure meant to prevent overdraft of groundwater resources in the state.

"You can't have it both ways," Wenger said. "They want to send more water to the ocean and tell us to simply pump more water, but we have SGMA telling us we can't do that."

California's water wars heat up at Sacramento hearing over river flows

[Kurtis Alexander](#)

Aug. 21, 2018

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/science/article/California-s-water-wars-heat-up-at-Sacramento-13172415.php>

Central Valley farmers and their elected leaders converged on Sacramento on Tuesday to accuse the state of engineering a water grab that puts the fate of fish above their fields and jeopardizes a thriving agricultural economy.

The allegations came at a meeting of the powerful State Water Resources Control Board, which recently unveiled a far-reaching plan to shore up the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the West Coast's largest estuary and a source of water for much of California.

The plan calls for irrigation districts as well as some urban water suppliers, including San Francisco, to reduce their draws on rivers that feed the delta in an effort to boost inflows into the depleted estuary and help wildlife.

Water plan will 'decimate' economy; hundreds converge at Capitol for protest

By Ken Carlson

August 20, 2018 04:36 PM

Updated August 20, 2018 08:18 PM

<https://www.modbee.com/latest-news/article217046535.html>

Board to rethink flows plan as opposition mounts

[Tim Hearden](#) | Aug 20, 2018

<https://www.westernfarmpress.com/water/board-rethink-flows-plan-opposition-mounts>

Amid a building bipartisan consensus against the plan, the State Water Resources Control Board will hold off on deciding whether to impose higher flows in three key rivers in the San Joaquin Valley to help fish.

Board chairwoman Felicia Marcus told state Natural Resources Secretary John Laird in a letter last week that the panel will not vote on the proposal to set minimum flows in the Merced, Tuolumne and Stanislaus rivers at the end of a two-day public hearing Aug. 21-22 in Sacramento.

However, the delay also comes amid mounting opposition from President Donald Trump's administration and among federal and state lawmakers in both parties. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation commissioner Brenda Burman threatened to sue the state water board if it devalued the federal government's investment in its water projects.

Burman's threat was backed up in an Aug. 16 [letter](#) to the board by 15 members of Congress from California -- Republicans Tom McClintock, Kevin McCarthy, Ken Calvert, Devin Nunes, Doug LaMalfa, Jeff Denham, David Valadao, Paul Cook, Mimi Walters, Duncan Hunter, Dana Rohrabacher, Ed Royce, Darrell Issa and Steve Knight and Democrat Jim Costa.

"The board's proposal clearly subordinates the beneficial human use of the water in favor of fish and wildlife measures of dubious validity, contrary to congressional authorization of the Central Valley Project and the New Melones Dam," the lawmakers wrote.

Opposition has also been building among state legislators. Assemblyman Adam Gray, D-Merced, is holding a rally at noon today on the steps of the state capitol to protest the plan, which would require an average of 40 percent unimpaired flows along the Merced, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus rivers. The rivers are key tributaries to the San Joaquin River.

Guest view: Revised 'water grab' could lead to severe, irreversible impacts

By Bob Elliott / San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

Aug 20, 2018

<http://www.recordnet.com/opinion/20180820/guest-view-revised-water-grab-could-lead-to-severe-irreversible-impacts>

The Colorado River

Californians sometimes forget that 30 percent of Southern California's water comes from the Colorado River. Not only does the Colorado River Project make a large contribution to the Metropolitan Water District of California's water supply, but the entire Imperial Valley depends on the waters of the river. The Imperial Valley provides as much as 15% of the nation's vegetables, especially during the winter. So, the threat of near-term rationing of the river's water as reported in the articles below is of serious concern to not only people of this state, but also the nation.

Federal officials predict shortage for Lake Mead in 2020, adding more pressure on states for drought plan

By Daniel Rothberg

August 16th, 2018

<https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/federal-officials-predict-shortage-for-lake-mead-in-2020-adding-more-pressure-on-states-for-drought-plan>

On Wednesday, the federal agency charged with managing the West's water released a report showing a likelihood that shortages at Lake Mead will be starting in 2020. It would mark the first cuts on the Colorado River, where some states would be required to reduce the amount of water they divert from the river. It would also reflect a long-coming reckoning with historical overuse, made worse by drought, that water managers see as an increasing threat to the water supply.

The study, [released by the Bureau of Reclamation](#), places more pressure on Arizona, California and Nevada — the states that draw water from Lake Mead — to complete a drought plan. Some form of the plan has been discussed for about eight years, and it was expected to be completed this year. But negotiations stalled earlier this year after a [power struggle in Arizona](#) and several [states publicly accused an Arizona water agency of acting in bad faith](#) on the overtapped river.

As Colorado River Basin reservoirs drop to near-record low levels, possibility of unprecedented water shortage declaration rises

By [Bruce Finley](#)

The Denver Post

August 16, 2018

<https://www.denverpost.com/2018/08/16/colorado-river-basin-reservoirs-low-levels/>

The Colorado River is so strained amid population growth and a climate shift to hotter, drier conditions that federal water managers may declare an unprecedented “shortage” and cut releases from reservoirs.

The feds are imploring Western states to do more now to cut water use.

A U.S. Bureau of Reclamation forecast issued Wednesday for water in the Colorado River — an over-subscribed lifeline for 40 million people — anticipates declaration of a shortage in September 2019 that would trigger the reduced water releases from federal reservoirs in “lower basin” states including Nevada and Arizona.

Colorado and other “upper basin” states Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico would face increased

scrutiny of flows from headwaters into the Lake Powell reservoir. On Wednesday, Lake Powell measured 49 percent full and Lake Mead measured 38 percent full.

“Water stored in Lake Mead and Lake Powell has blunted the impacts of the ongoing drought and helped ensure consistent, reliable water and power,” said Brent Rhees, the bureau’s regional director for the upper basin. “We must continue to work to protect water in the basin. Completing drought contingency plans this year will provide better certainty. We can’t afford to wait for a crisis.”



Declaration of a water shortage along the Colorado River would be unprecedented. Federal officials are committed to waiting until the water level in Lake Mead drops below the elevation of 1,075 feet above sea level. Then they’d cut deliveries, first targeting Arizona, Nevada and Mexico.

The water level on Wednesday: 1,078 feet.

“We’re within three feet. We’re not going to declare a shortage in 2019,” agency spokesman Marlon Duke said. “There’s a 52-percent chance we will have to declare a shortage in 2020. ... We cannot just sit back and think the river is going to provide all the water we need, especially as our cities continue to grow. It all depends on what Mother Nature sends us next year.”

The forecast says river flows into Lake Powell from Colorado and other upper basin states, from snowpack, probably won’t exceed 75 percent of average next year. It says 8.23 million acre-feet of water will flow from Lake Powell to Lake Mead in 2019. That’s more than the amount expected to flow into Lake Powell.

People in the seven southwestern states “must learn to live with less water,” said Kim Mitchell of the Boulder-based Western Resource Advocates. “Unless we take decisive, proactive steps now, major water users, farmers, cities, businesses, and the environment all will lose water. ... Leaders at all levels throughout the basin must understand that more water is being pulled out of the Colorado River than is being replaced and the problem is compounded by a long-term drought and climate change.”

Lake Mead water shortage could spell trouble for Colorado

By [Marianne Goodland](#) As originally reported by Colorado Politics
Wednesday, Aug. 22, 2018
<https://durangoherald.com/articles/237781>

More Fallout From the Tariffs

Last week I reported on the article from *Political* reprinted from the *South China Morning Post*, “China says U.S. farmers may never regain market share lost in trade war.” Perhaps this item is a part of that scenario.

Moscow Offers Eastern Russia Farmland to China for Soybean Gap

Aug. 18 (EIRNS) -- Reports are out this week that Moscow has offered 1.5 million hectares of farmland in eastern Russia for China to use to deal with its gap of soybean supplies, as a result of the U.S. tariffs conflict reducing soy imports from the U.S., formerly a big supplier. Understandably, the land would have to be developed, and transportation assured, which takes time and resources, but the gesture is clear and positive.

This initiative was reported Aug. 15 by the {South China Morning Post} which also reported, "Valery Dubrovskiy, director of investment for the Far East Investment and Export Agency, a non-profit organization, said on Tuesday that several Chinese companies had already expressed an interest in the deal.

"We expect most of the investment to come from China," he said. "We expect 50% from China, 25% from Russia, and 25% from other countries, like Japan and Korea."

"The announcement means that all of the 3 million hectares of arable land in Russia's Far Eastern Federal District is now available to farmers, Dubrovskiy said, adding that the space is suitable for dairy farming or the growing of crops, such as soybeans, wheat and potatoes...."

Russia Offers 2.5 Million Acres Of Farmland To China, Amid Worsening Trade War

08/18/2018

<https://www.zerohedge.com/news/2018-08-16/russia-offers>

Infrastructure

Genoa Bridge Collapse Shows How Privatizations Kill

Aug. 16 (EIRNS)—After the collapse of the highway bridge in Genoa, public opinion and media in EU countries are raising the question of the infrastructure safety in the EU. Although maintenance has generally been neglected and investments have cut because of austerity policies throughout the EU, the ultimate cause of the Genoa catastrophe is known by the name of “Britannia.”

In fact, although many factors contributed to the collapse of the Morandi Bridge in Genoa, we can state with high certainty that had the highway not been privatized, the bridge would be standing today.

In May, the Benetton family-controlled Atlantia company, which has a 30-year concession on half of the Italian highway network through the Autostrade company, had launched a tender to repair the stays which are now suspected of causing the collapse of the bridge. The tender was concluded in record time, but Atlantia decided to wait to start repairs after the summer. Why? Atlantia will have to

answer that question before prosecutors.

We can attempt an answer: The work was postponed in order not to lose the seasonal income bonanza. Italian highways are toll roads, over which most Italian families and many tourists on vacation drive. The A7 highway is in a key position on the route to the Riviera and to the Mediterranean islands, such as Corsica and Sardinia, through the port of Genoa. Starting the repair work in May-June would have meant closing or severely limiting traffic on the bridge and thereby jeopardizing that income.

Had the highway not been privatized, the government-owned IRI company would have put safety first and started repairs immediately.

Atlantia and the entire system of the privately owned highway network (over 6,000 km) is now under scrutiny for lack of investment and maintenance. Although income and profits have steadily increased over the years, Atlantia has decreased investments and maintenance, and instead paying fat dividends to shareholders, and gone into expensive shopping abroad. Between 2012 and 2016, Atlantia paid €1.5 billions in dividends. In 2017 Atlantia made a net profit of €972 millions, a 19% yearly growth.

In May, Atlantia had launched a €16 billion takeover bid for the Spanish highway company Abertis, which ended up in a joint consortium controlled by Atlantia with 50% of the capital plus one share.

Over the years, despite periods in which highway traffic decreased in Italy, Atlantia's income has steadily increased thanks to its quasi-monopolistic position, and to a 30% increase of tolls since 2008.

According to author Mario Giordano, of the needed €280 million investments on the Liguria highway, Atlantia spent only €76 million last year. Investments are a condition for increasing tolls, according to the concession.

Autostrade was privatized as part of the privatization orgy which started with a symbolic event: The famous meeting on Queen Elizabeth's yacht Britannia off the coast of Italy on June 2, 1992. Two Italian figures were at that meeting, who played a key role in the privatizations: Treasury Minister Beniamino Andreatta and Treasury Director General Mario Draghi.

Andreatta put the state-owned conglomerate IRI in receivership with a government decree, and he and his successors started to chop it up and privatize it: banks, steel, shipyards, food, transport, etc. Autostrade was given in a 30-year private concession to the Benetton family in 1999. The concession was then extended by four years under the Gentiloni government.

The man who oversaw all privatizations as head of the ad hoc Privatizations Committee was Mario Draghi, who stayed there through all technocratic governments run by Amato, Prodi, Dini and Ciampi. He resigned in 2002 only to become European head of Goldman Sachs, from which he then became governor of the Bank of Italy in 2005 and president of the European Central Bank in 2011.

Notably, the other two major crises urgently facing the current Italian government—the ILVA steel plant and the Alitalia crisis—are also a product of privatizations.

China Brings Ultra-High Voltage Technology to Brazil's Electrical Grid

Aug. 21 (EIRNS)—The ultra-high voltage (UHV) cable lines China's State Grid company and local Brazilian companies such as Tractebel are now putting up to transmit electricity from the huge Belo Monte dam on the Brazilian-Bolivian border in the Amazon region down to power-short southeastern city of Rio de Janeiro, is a great step forward for the Belt and Road Initiative in Ibero-America, the Portuguese-language edition of People's Daily reported yesterday.

The transmission lines, which will provide power to Rio de Janeiro and vicinity, are the second phase of the Belo Monte project which radical environmentalists did everything in their power to stop.

China's Ambassador to Brazil Li Jinzhang told People's Daily that China's UHV technology is "a calling card of 'Made in China'.... This is the first time that China applies UHV technology abroad. Its construction inaugurates a new historic stage, which marks the recognition by other countries of UHV technology and other technologies created in China. Through the Belo Monte project, Brazil's government, businesses and local population expressed the will and interest in deepening mutually beneficial cooperation which is advantageous to all."

Former U.S. Secretary of Energy Stephen Chu has called China's development of UHV technology a "Sputnik moment" for the U.S., the Financial Times reported on June 6, 2018. "China has the best transmission lines in terms of the highest voltage and lowest loss. They can transmit electricity over 2,000 km and lose only 7% of the energy. If we transmitted over 200 km we would lose more than that," Chu stated.

Feature

The Schiller Institute, under the leadership of Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has launched an [urgent international petition drive](#), seeking a conference of the United States, Russia, China, and India, to establish a new fixed exchange rate system for world trade and development, modeled on Franklin Roosevelt's concept of the Bretton Woods system. On August 15, 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon took the dollar out of the Bretton Woods system, ending the post World War II stability which had allowed the destroyed economies of Europe and Asia to not only recover from the War, but to build the modern infrastructure necessary for continued prosperity. Roosevelt's intention for the post-war period as reported by his son, Elliot Roosevelt, was to use the Bretton Woods system to destroy British colonialism, the poverty and backwardness it produced, once and for all. Now a new such Bretton Woods conference between the U.S., Russia, China, and India, represents the only means to mitigate and survive the pending collapse of the post 2008 financial bubble, a bubble bigger by orders of magnitude than that of 2008, the collapse of which will engulf the entire world in chaos.

Time Has Come For a New Bretton Woods, Based on LaRouche's Four Laws

<https://larouchepac.com/20180823/time-has-come-new-bretton-woods-based-larouches-four-laws#.W39DCs9pkcI.facebook>

Does anyone really believe that more Quantitative Easing (QE) will solve the accelerating world financial crisis? That creating more unpayable debt, through Central Banks increasing the volumes of QE funny money surging through system, will rebuild a single bridge, a kilometer of rail, or produce one productive job paying a livable wage? Or that more free trade, privatization and deregulation are the keys to economic prosperity? These are the "solutions" being pushed by the imperial elites of London and Wall Street who are still dictating policy in the Trans-Atlantic region.

Schiller Institute Launches Urgent International Petition Drive For A New Bretton Woods Conference

[READ THE PETITION & SIGN IT HERE](#)

Or, here:

https://schillerinstitute.nationbuilder.com/nbw_petition