

Drought may be over, but California still has to solve water woes

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Ski bums aren't the only ones ecstatic over the state's snowpack.

Gov. Jerry Brown's pronouncement of the obvious -- California's drought is officially over -- is a relief to residents, farmers and everyone who cares about the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, as environmental catastrophe is staved off a bit longer.

But before you haul out the hose to wash the car, remember: California is essentially a desert climate, even though we act like we're on Maui.

The long-range water prognosis is unchanged by one wet winter. Even now, state officials say they can supply just 70 percent of the requested deliveries this year.

Reservoirs are so full that the Santa Clara Valley Water District had to release water to keep the dams safe in the event of an earthquake. It's a reminder that the district has to bring those dams up to seismic standards.

Meanwhile, negotiations over how to fix the Delta and work toward a truly reliable water supply are going nowhere fast. At least the Legislature eventually passes a budget every year. The Delta water fight has been raging since Brown was governor the first time three decades ago.

So hang onto those low-flow shower heads, and think about losing that water hog of a lawn. No water fix is in sight, and the next drought is just around the corner.