

Ending California's man-made drought could be as simple as passing this act

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Californians lost 21,000 jobs and California's economy lost \$703 million in agricultural revenue due to pumping restrictions in 2009, according to experts at the University of California. Unemployment in some towns exceeds 40 percent. California faces a \$21 billion budget shortfall through June 2011, according to the California Legislative Analyst's Office. California needs to strengthen its economy, not let it be impoverished by further water restrictions.

Mandatory rationing and costs will increase. There is no limit to the duration of the water crisis. These cutbacks mean a reduction in gardens, green spaces, and the quality of urban life. They require costly investments and restrictions on watering.

Farmers are losing their competitive edge to foreign markets due to higher priced or unavailable water. According to economic and agricultural experts, increased reliance on foreign-grown food poses serious economic and food safety concerns.

How did it begin?

The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is the hub of California's water system. The system uses pumps and aqueducts to move water to urban and agricultural water users throughout the state.

The man-made drought began when federal restrictions were placed on the amount of water that the water system could pump from the Delta into the aqueducts, to allegedly save a fish. The aqueducts provide drinking water to more than 26 million people (about two-thirds of all Californians) and serve nearly 4 million acres of irrigated farmland (producing a quarter of the nation's food supply).

The Delta faces numerous severe challenges, such as the inflow of unmitigated urban sewage and dilapidated levees. Yet, it was when the pumps in the Delta were turned off that the water crisis began. Water now flows unused into the ocean.

The man-made drought can end as quickly as it began, by removing the federal restrictions. The Federal Turn on the Pumps Act provides immediate water by allowing the Delta pumping to return to normal. In fact, California lawmakers Nancy Pelosi, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer all voted to support similar legislation to protect Albuquerque, New Mexico's water supply in 2003. This was a victory to bring a rational balancing between the needs of man and a fish. Further, another Federal legislative solution was accomplished for the Imperial Valley in 2006.

But now Pelosi, Feinstein, Boxer and Harry Reid actively testify and vote against efforts to bring relief to their own state. Further, Congressmen Jim Costa and Dennis Cardoza voted against legislation to turn the pumps on. Costa and Cardoza voted against the best interests of Central Valley residents and did what the San Francisco liberals wanted them to do.

We all need water whether we are Democrats, Republicans, farmers, farm workers, urban or rural because it is

as basic as the air we breathe.

Tell Pelosi, Feinstein, Boxer, Costa, Cardoza, and Reid to pass the Turn on the Pumps Act immediately. Special interests are trying to block the passage of the Act. In this election year, tell them to vote for the Act, or you will vote for new members who will.