

# Southern California Leadership Council

## Opinion Editorial

### The Urgent Need for a New Water Strategy

We forget Southern California is really a semi-arid desert--brought to life by water supplies from the Colorado River, Owens Valley and State Water (Feather River) Project to supplement our local supplies. Our reliance on this imported water to meet the region's future needs puts us at ever greater risk. Future water supply reliability will increasingly depend on local self-help measures like conservation, reuse, more below ground storage of surplus supplies, and even desalination.

But more important and far more urgent is the serious threat we face today of real water shortages for much of the state because of the crisis in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta. Failure of its strained ecosystem and its labyrinth of unstable levees from flood or earthquake threaten to gravely reduce, or even suspend, deliveries from the State Water Project serving not only southern California, but users in the Bay area, San Joaquin Valley and the Central Coast . California's entire economy is at risk!


How do we address these issues that threaten the viability of our quality of life and our economy? First, we offer our support for a statewide solution for the Delta to address the ecosystem and to stabilize the water supply. The solution must include a new water conveyance infrastructure, funded by those who benefit from the system improvement. Second, we must move forward on Governor Schwarzenegger's call for a statewide 20% "across the board" water conservation effort. The business community can demonstrate its leadership in this effort. Third, in southern California, the Metropolitan Water District , local water agencies and the private water sector, in addition to their conservation and reuse initiatives, should begin to explore strategic efforts to partner, through the use of transportation and exchange arrangements, in the use of the extensive pipeline network and underground storage facilities throughout southern California to maximize the use of local water resources. Other regions should consider similar plans.

Finally, our state leaders need to reach agreement on a comprehensive, statewide water infrastructure plan, including bond funds for a Delta solution and local match "self-help" water reliability projects.

All this will cause our water service to cost more in the future, but going without a critically needed water supply is simply not an option.

  
Governor George Deukmejian

  
Governor Pete Wilson

  
Governor Gray Davis