

California's Low On Water? Time to Fine the Water Resources Board Not Its Citizens

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California is in the midst of one of its many droughts. To combat the current drought, the otherwise do-nothings of the California Water Resources Board are proposing to fine citizens they call “water hogs” \$500 per day. Instead of fining helpless consumers, California’s government should do its job for once and seriously increase water supplies.

It is well known that California is the most populated state in the Union, with more than 38 million people. Its population was just under 20 million in 1970, when the bulk of its current water storage and delivery systems were already built. In other words, the California governments have done very little to significantly increase water supplies in over 40 years, even though its population has doubled during that period of time.

California’s current drought was at its worst in 2013, and continues to this day. It is apparently less well known to the public, the media, and government that California has been subject to considerable droughts over the centuries, lasting up to 20 years in a row. In fact, contrary to the notion that California is suffering more droughts than usual, according to Scott Stine, a professor of geography and environmental studies at Cal State East Bay, as reported in the San Jose Mercury News, “the past century has been among the wettest of the last 7,000 years.”



Drought (Photo credit: Bert Kaufmann)

Rather than face the reality that California is subject to drought, what has California government been doing? Not much beyond talking.

As we all know, the President and others are selling the canard that the current drought is the result of global warming or climate change. The fact that we had decades- long droughts years before industrialization doesn't matter to them as they bloviate over a drought of several years.

Simply stated, California government has other priorities – priorities which to them are far more important than ensuring that 38 million people have water. They include:

- A High Speed Rail project, mired in lawsuits and of uncertain costs – at least \$68 billion but perhaps double that amount, and
- A 2004 \$3 billion stem cell bond program (\$6 billion with interest) that has produced no approved therapies but has, according to the AP, resulted in “the opening of sleek buildings and gleaming labs at a dozen private and public universities built with matching funds” without any cures in the pipeline. Of course, now they want more money.

California legislators spend millions more on nonessential items like \$2.7 million for a new swimming pool in Calexico near the Mexican border – during a drought. California is also spending an additional \$46.6 million to build up to 54 hydrogen fuel stations to serve a state of 158,648 square miles. That is one station for every 2,938 square miles. Hope you don't get stranded.

Rather than waste money on such projects, which can't possibly be more important than water, California

should look to places like Singapore to learn what a responsible government should be doing.

Singapore has but 247 square miles. It is a population of nearly 4.5 million people. Obviously, it has very little land for such things as reservoirs. Instead, Singapore relies on 15 reservoirs, desalinated water, water reclamation, and imported water to meet their water needs.

Singapore obviously made water production a priority for its tiny landmass that is 0.155% of California's landmass, yet has 8.4% of California's population. That is what responsible governments do, and one reason why Singapore has the third highest per-capita GDPs in the world, despite its size and lack of natural resources.

Rather than serve its citizens, Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the water resources board, lords over them and states that: "I like to say, having a browning lawn and a dirty car is a badge of honor."

You see for California, which is #1 in the country in poverty in no small part because of a lack of water for agriculture, government failure is not only an option, it is standard operating procedure.

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