

Do you get it now, folks?

December 25, 2014

Endangered Species Act regulatory actions to protect fish like the delta smelt began impacting the state and federal water projects in 1992 and increased incrementally ever since. Today the average annual loss of previously deliverable water supplies is about 5,000,000 acre-feet per year, enough to fill five Pine Flat reservoirs. But it wasn't until 2014, during the first multiyear drought with all of those accumulated ESA actions in place that those water supply losses began impacting urban water users.

For the last 20-plus years farmers and water managers were heard to say, "Fish are more important than people." I said it many times myself. And the reaction of people living in cities was often disbelief — "there's no proof of that."

Californians are hoping recent storms signal the start of drought recovery. But Mark Grossi's article (Dec. 21) describes how delta export pumping is being reduced preemptively in hopes of avoiding a repeat of 2012 when 800,000 acre-feet were lost to the ocean. The current pumping cutbacks not only waste even more desperately needed water, they jeopardize drought recovery and irrefutably prove that "fish are more important than people." Do you get it now, folks?

Lance W. Johnson

Shaver Lake

Join The Conversation

[Copyright](#)

© 2014 www.fresnobee.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>