

Jerry Brown argues against ‘Big Brother’ picking crops in drought

By David Siders
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With almonds and alfalfa coming in for criticism amid California’s drought, Gov. Jerry Brown argued Thursday against any “Big Brother” effort to curtail production of water-heavy crops.

“That’s a ‘Big Brother’ move, and we’re not in that position,” Brown told reporters after a drought-related meeting at the Capitol.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, about 9 million acres of farmland in California are irrigated, representing about 80 percent of the water used by people.

The Democratic governor continued to defend the industry on Thursday.

“Agriculture is an important pillar of California,” Brown said, “and I think we have to be very slow to be starting to pick” between crops with policies favoring one over another.

Brown met at the Capitol with representatives of the landscape, golf, pool, manufacturing and other industries about the drought.

Asked about resistance from some Californians to a mandatory 25 percent reduction in water use in cities and towns, Brown said the goal is attainable – but also subject to ongoing review.

“That’s why we’re here,” he said. “Maybe we can do more, maybe we have to do it differently. We don’t do it all in one day, and that’s, that’s the beauty of government. It doesn’t go away.”

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