

## William Shatner: Solve California drought with Seattle pipeline

For generations, water-hungry Southern California has jealously eyed the rainy Pacific Northwest as a potential source of the precious resource.

And time after time, it has been rebuffed.

When Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn in 1990 proposed digging aqueducts that would grab water from the Columbia and Snake rivers, Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt responded: "I have the distinct impression that you are trying to steal my water."

Now actor William Shatner has waded in with his own improbable plan.

William Shatner, seen here April 2, is hoping to raise \$30 billion to build a pipeline from Seattle to California to help the drought situation. (Chris Pizzello / Invision / Associated Press)

William Shatner

"I want \$30 billion ... to build a pipeline like the Alaska pipeline. Say, from Seattle — a place where there's a lot of water. There's too much water," the "Star Trek" actor told Yahoo's David Pogue. "How bad would it be to get a large, 4 foot four-foot pipeline, keep it above ground — because if it leaks, you're irrigating!"

Shatner said he plans to launch a Kickstarter campaign to raise the cash.

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The 84-year-old actor's idea comes at a time in an era when California is trying to better conserve the water it has, rather than get more from outside the state.

But that wasn't always the case.

The Golden State was trying to get ahold of Columbia River water way back in the 1960s.

Around the same time, some in Alaska floated the idea of building a 1,700-mile pipeline to bring water to Southern California.

But it wasn't until 1991 that then-Alaska Gov. Walter Hickel came to L.A. to meet with Hahn to discuss the idea.

"Hickel believes the pipeline could be built on the back of a huge barge and lowered to the sea floor like a big garden hose as the barge moves south. And because it would be under the sea, the pipeline could be built of reinforced plastic instead of the concrete and steel that would be needed to withstand the rigors of a land route," The Times wrote in 1991.

The general consensus was that the pipeline could work but that it would not only be costly to build, but also to power the pumping required to move the water.

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Hahn told reporters he would rather tap water from the Pacific Northwest, "but the governors of all those states wrote me nasty letters. So I thought, forget the Columbia River, I'll go higher."

California now is facing one of the most severe droughts in its modern history. Irrigation deliveries have been slashed,

and farmers expect to idle more than 500,000 acres of cropland this year. Groundwater levels in some parts of the San Joaquin Valley have sunk to record lows as growers drill more and deeper wells. Some small communities dependent on local sources have run out of water.

Although major reservoirs in Northern California hold more water than they did a year ago, the Sierra Nevada snowpack that normally provides the state with about a third of its water supply hit a record low for April 1.

Gov. Jerry Brown has ordered urban communities across the state to cut water use by 25% over the next year.

Shatner said that even if his Seattle pipeline doesn't work, he hopes it will increase awareness of the drought.

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