

# Brown: Water woes have deep roots

## News



by **JOHN HOWARD** posted 05.06.2015

Gov. Jerry Brown went back to the future Wednesday, saying water problems have confronted him, his father's governorship and their predecessors as they sought ways to get northern water to the south.

Brown, who supports a plan to ship water through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, said delta-linked proposals had been studied for decades, with perhaps a million personnel-hours spent looking at the plan.

"Until you put a million hours into it, shut up!" Brown, defending the proposal, told a gathering of hundreds of people at a statewide conference of the Association of California Water Agencies. Brown's comment drew applause.

"For 50 years, people have been trying to figure out how do we deal with fish, how do we deal with the conveyance of water, what's the most efficient way to do it," he said. "The drought is very much a part of California's past and future. We get droughts. We've had droughts before, but now we have droughts and higher temperatures and the fire season is so much longer than it used to be."

The Brown administration has proposed a pair of tunnels through the delta to carry water southward to the California aqueduct, plus environmental protection and restoration projects. The final plans have not yet been approved.

During his first terms governor in the 1970s and early 80s, Brown faced a historic drought and approved the multibillion-dollar Peripheral Canal to move water to central and southern California in a 42-mile canal along the edge of the delta east of San Francisco. The delta is the source of about half the state's drinking water. Voters rejected the canal in a 1982 referendum.

His father, Pat Brown, served as state attorney general in the 50s, then served two terms as governor from 1959 to 1967. Brown succeeded Goodwin Knight. All studied water delivery problems, Brown said.

“I’ve been hearing about water for most of my life and I’ve had the opportunity to deal with it as governor now for many years,” Brown, 77, told several hundred people at a conference of the Association of California Water Agencies. “These things are deja vu all over again. They are the same kinds of issues.”

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*Ed’s Note: For other Capitol Weekly stories on water, go [here](#) (a look at water rates in California), [here](#) (the use of desalination) and [here](#) (conservation efforts).*