

## Annan Jensen: Water and the need for fundamental change

Contributed by Sophie Annan Jensen  
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If you read only California newspapers, you might have the idea that California is unique in its current drought. It's a problem we share with areas as diverse as our Great Lakes region, southern Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Texas, the Dakotas, Hawaii, Spain, China, Argentina, the Middle East &ndash; including Iraq and Israel &ndash; and Australia, which has lost 90,000 farm jobs and millions of its lambs and dairy cows because of drought. They're also suffering huge losses from wildfires which they can't fight because there's no water; more fires are expected.

You're welcome to believe whatever you want about the causes of this worldwide problem.

- It's global warming as explained by Al Gore.
- It's just a natural climate cycle.
- It's chemical spraying.
- It's Mother Earth fighting back at overpopulation and pollution.
- It's La Niña and it will go away soon.
- It's the God of your choice punishing us for something you don't like.

What you believe doesn't matter. It's happening, and it doesn't look as if we're responding well. In Spain last year, Barcelona was preparing to ship water in by truck, while a golf course was being planned in an arid region near the city.

The desert city of Las Vegas is gambling it can end its 10-year drought by tapping into underground aquifers northeast of the city, environmental consequences be damned.

Patricia Mulroy, manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, says, &ldquo;We've tried everything &hellip; The way you look at water has to fundamentally change.&rdquo;

No kidding. (Right, it sounds like the water guy in &ldquo;Chinatown,&rdquo; but that was Mulwray.)

In Sacramento, Governor Arnie repeated last year's call for a voluntary 20-percent cut in water use, and he and US Sen. Dianne Feinstein are talking about more dams. The state is broke; they didn't mention what they'd use for money.

In Lake County, despite the advice of Agricultural Commissioner Steve Hajik and Farm Bureau Executive Director Chuck March that we should avoid losing any of our good agricultural land, our planning commission has approved going ahead with a final environmental impact report on a development which would do just that.

Ms. Mulroy has one thing right: &ldquo;The way you look at water has to fundamentally change.&rdquo;

Maybe we could start by remembering that we're in the mostly dry West, of which Mark Twain is alleged to have said &ldquo;Whiskey's for drinkin' and water's for fightin'.&rdquo;

Then maybe we can think about why, if water is truly a &ldquo;right,&rdquo; people have been moving to where the water is throughout history.

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