

# Opinion: California must boost water storage

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There's nothing like a couple of wet years to dampen arguments that environmental protection regulations are depleting water supplies needed by agricultural and urban users.

A record 6.5 million acre-feet has been pumped from the Delta this year, mostly to Central Valley farms and Southern California. That is enough to serve the state's entire population for a year and a half.

Much of the water went to refill water banks and reservoirs, which were depleted during the dry years from 2007 through 2009.

It was the three-year drought, not environmental rules, that resulted in water pumping reductions to the dismay of farmers, who blamed what they believed were overly strict pumping regulations to protect fish and wildlife.

Even with all the record pumping this year, millions of acre-feet of water went out to sea. In one period earlier this year, 3 million acre-feet of fresh water flowed to the sea in just 10 days.

That is the amount of water that makes the difference between California having an adequate water supply and an insufficient one.

If California's annual rain and snowfall were similar to those of the past couple of years, there would be far fewer problems with meeting everyone's needs. But that is not the case.

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