

# Calif. pot growers a drain on water resources

By Rob Hotakainen, McClatchy

WASHINGTON – In drought-hit California, marijuana growers are feeling the heat, accused of using too much water for their thirsty plants and of polluting streams and rivers with their pesticides and fertilizers.

State officials say a pot plant sucks up an average of 6 gallons of water per day, worsening a shortage caused by one of the biggest droughts on record. They say the situation is particularly acute along California's North Coast, where the growing pressure to irrigate pot threatens salmon and other fish.

California is also the most popular state for pot producers to grow crops in U.S. forests, accounting for 86 percent of the nearly 1 million plants federal officials seized in 2012.

The situation is a complicated one in California, which passed the nation's first medical marijuana law in 1996, allowing people to possess and grow pot, even though the federal government still bans the drug.

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