

Editorial: Bigger dams won't make California greener

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California's northern rivers are so low that young Chinook salmon have to be trucked on their journey to the Pacific Ocean. Yet to listen to some farmers and their political allies, you would think the fish, shielded by environmental law, are doing fine, while the state's \$45 billion agricultural economy is being sucked dry by the epic drought.

Their solution: build huge tunnels, expand big dams (federally subsidized, of course) and pipe more water from the relatively wet north to the dry south. But Mother Nature is sending a different message: California can't count on having bounties of water to meet all the claims on it.

Although some new storage plans make sense – especially small-scale, local projects and repairs to existing infrastructure – no new mammoth public works are going to draw more water from the sky. That 20th-century strategy perpetuates wasteful agricultural practices and antiquated water-rights laws. California's water future would be better secured through measures that make the most efficient use of every drop.

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