

Editorial: Calif. needs to manage its groundwater

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Aug. 21, 2014, San Jose Mercury News.*

Fifty years ago, the rapidly subsiding groundwater throughout the West brought urgent calls for action. Arizona responded. So did Colorado, Oregon, Texas – yes, Texas – and others. But not California. It is the only western state that does not have a groundwater management program.

Now California is paying a heavy price for failing to limit pumping of groundwater, which supplies 60 percent of the state's water, as it does diverting water from rivers. Corporate agriculture landowners still resist it, but more and more farmers are acknowledging that the rate of pumping has become alarming.

California needs to require local water agencies to establish and enforce groundwater management plans so that water taken out doesn't exceed what is naturally replenished. Sen. Fran Pavley's SB1168 and Assemblyman Roger Dickinson's parallel AB 1739 would do this, giving agencies until 2020 to adopt plans and empowering the state to step in if they don't. The legislation should become law. It may be more important to the state than Gov. Jerry Brown's \$7 billion water bond.

Read the whole story