

Editorial: Drought making Calif. more like Ariz.

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For many years, California has stared at the prospect of long-running drought and effectively sniffed with contempt.

In the minds of many urban Californians, drought may be a burden and an annoyance, but hardly a threat to the coastal lifestyle.

Yes, the consequences of long-term drought, like urban brushfires and a decimated Central Valley farm industry, may be a concern. But the elaborate and enormous water-delivery network serving Southern California – including the state's "first in line" status for Colorado River water – would assure that water in the cities always could be had at a price.

That attitude seems to be changing. California drought researchers have concluded the state may be in the grip not just of "drought," but of a mega-drought. The environmental conditions that gave birth to the most populous state in the Union may have constituted a 150-year, wetter-than-normal anomaly. California now may be looking at its genuinely normal condition, which is far more arid.

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