

# Governors working on coping with drought



Govs. Jerry Brown, left, and Brian Sandoval are dealing with drought in their respective states. Photo/LTN file

## By Associated Press

The governors of California and Nevada met Thursday at a forum aimed at coming up with the best ways to cope with the unprecedented drought affecting the Western U.S., now in its third year.

“I think the drought will test our imagination and our science, our technology and our political capacity to collaborate,” California Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, said in opening remarks.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, chairman of the Western Governors’ Association, initiated the yearlong series of meetings that include senior water, energy and agriculture policy leaders from government and the private sector. The meetings will lead to a report of best practices to be released next June.

This week’s meeting in Sacramento is focused on how to manage the drought’s effect on agriculture.

“These farmers ... they come to me and they feel really helpless. They don’t know what to do. And their livelihood is at stake,” said Sandoval, a Republican.

California voters last week approved a \$7.5 billion water bond measure that will allow the state to expand storage and develop water management plans.

Brown noted that the proposals for addressing California’s water problems will be controversial, including his contested \$25 billion plan to build twin tunnels underneath the Delta that would make it easier to pump water from the Sacramento River to Central Valley farms and Southern California cities.

In another contentious move, Brown recently signed into law the first regulations governing the use of California’s groundwater, bringing it in line with other states.

Brown said a recent flight over Northern California gave him a view of the hundreds of canals and tunnels that help the state move water. Brown’s father, former Gov. Pat Brown, built the State Water Project, an extensive system of reservoirs and canals that was considered an engineering marvel in its day but was built for a population of half the current 38 million.

“There are a lot of people who think somehow engineering water from point A to point B is somehow unnatural,” he said. “Well we long ago passed the unnatural in California.”