

Officials: Water is going to cost more in Calif.

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

Californians face higher water prices and permanent conservation measures amid drought, global warming and population growth in a state that has long struggled to satisfy urban and agricultural needs, the administration of Governor Jerry Brown said Thursday.

It will take up to \$500 billion to improve the state's water infrastructure to improve supplies, reduce flood risk and shore up the fragile ecosystems that provide water for people, farms and wildlife, the state's top natural resources officials said in a long-awaited update to California's water plan.

"Water is going to cost more for Californians in the future," said Mark Cowin, director of the state department of water resources, in a conference call with reporters on Thursday. "That's a reality we're all going to have to get used to."

But the state has long struggled to meet the water needs of thirsty cities and its mammoth agricultural sector, prompting a century of political fights between the wetter north and the drier south.

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