

Calif. wells keep drying up

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

Just a few months ago, the state's top water officials said they had reason for optimism. Rain was cascading down on California in December and water conservation passed 20%.

"I, for one, had high hopes," Mark Cowin, director of the state Department of Water Resources, told a California Senate joint oversight hearing on the drought last week.

Cowin and his colleagues sat before lawmakers and took turns delivering a series of sobering facts and figures about the state's persistent drought: The mountain snowpack was dismal; conservation is falling far short of Gov. Jerry Brown's 25 percent mandate; officials are curtailing water rights.

One fact in particular caught senators' attention, though. About 1,900 wells have gone dry, Cowin said.

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