

# Lawsuits challenge California's drought plan

By Dale Kasler and Phillip Reese, Sacramento Bee

A group of water districts sued California regulators Friday over the state's order prohibiting holders of some of the oldest water rights from pumping water out of rivers and streams.

The lawsuit, filed in Stanislaus Superior Court, challenges the State Water Resources Control Board's decision last week to ban diversions by 114 different rights holders in the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds.

The affected groups are senior water rights holders. That means they've held the right to divert water since before 1914, when California established its rights system. Last week's decision by the water board marked the first time since the drought of 1977 that any senior rights have been curtailed.

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