

Opinion: Calif. reaps bitter harvest of environmental extremism

By Darrell Issa, Orange County Register

California has always prided itself on setting an example for the nation. From its early Gold Rush days, through the rise of its tech industry and the Silicon Valley, the Golden State has repeatedly positioned itself on the cutting edge of the next significant undertaking in American society.

Today, unfortunately, California's lack of preparedness for this multiyear drought is an example of what happens when the state's historic boldness and ingenuity take a backseat to a radical political ideology.

How could such an industrious and forward-thinking state – which is also the world's eighth-largest economy – ever allow itself to get in this position?

In the 1970s, the environmentalist movement began to take shape in the United States. Many California lawmakers and the state's youthful first-term governor, Jerry Brown, embraced the tenets of this movement and set ambitious goals to create a futuristic Golden State in the vein of environmental idealism. While the notion of making California the greenest state in the country at all costs probably seemed as exciting and ambitious to politicians as building a high-speed bullet train to connect San Francisco to Los Angeles, the consequences of environmental extremism have proven to be, at best, problematic and, at worst, detrimental during times of crisis.

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