

Water woes divide Calif. into haves, have nots

By **Tori Richards**, U.S. News & World Report

LOS ANGELES – People have long predicted that California could eventually collapse into the ocean following a mega earthquake. Now, an eerily similar true-life scenario is playing out – but it's thanks to the weather.

The Gold Rush State has sunk more than 45 feet since 1935 – something the U.S. government calls the “largest human alteration of the earth's surface.” But earthquakes aren't the cause. It's happening because of excessive groundwater mining brought on by drought, and geologists say all the rain in the world won't reverse cave-ins of dirt and rock in underground aquifers.

California is entering its fifth year of drought, with the past two years being the warmest on record. Several recent storms have dumped much needed water, but it's barely made a dent. It will take several years of rain to bring the state out of its crisis mode regardless of how many spring showers occur. If the state gets the intense rain storms that Californians pray for, they will produce floods as the water has nowhere to go. But if the drought continues, things will just get worse.

Read the whole story