

Calif. water crisis not on presidential candidates' radar

By Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle

WASHINGTON – The 20th century dams and canals that gave birth to modern California – to San Francisco, to Los Angeles, to the San Joaquin Valley farms that feed the nation – are near the end of their engineered lives. The rivers and aquifers they tap are, simply, tapped out.

The state's record drought, only dented by last winter's rains, comes amid a 16-year dry spell in the Colorado River basin, which provides 16 percent of California's water. The basin's giant reservoirs are dwindling and may never fill again, even as the nation's population continues to shift relentlessly into the arid West.

So far, the three people running for president have hardly noticed these problems as they barnstorm the state heading into the June 7 primary.

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