

Calif. population expected to outstrip water conservation

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

California water agencies are on track to satisfy a state mandate to reduce water consumption 20 percent by 2020. But according to their own projections, that savings won't be enough to keep up with population growth just a decade later.

A 2009 state law requires urban water agencies to reduce per-capita water consumption 20 percent by 2020, compared with use at the start of the century. Most agencies are on track to reach that goal, and have made even more progress thanks to emergency cuts over the past year triggered by the ongoing drought.

However, by 2030, the data show, these savings will be more than erased by anticipated population growth. According to projections by the water agencies themselves, their total water deliveries will increase 16 percent by 2030 compared to their estimates for 2015.

California's population, already larger than all other Western states combined, is expected to grow 14 percent during that same period, reaching an estimated 44 million people by 2030, according to the state Department of Finance.

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