

Changing climate at Mono Lake could mean more dust storms

By Louis Sahagun, Los Angeles Times

Climate change is bringing less snow to the Sierra Nevada mountains – and less snowmelt to Mono Lake. That means if Los Angeles keeps taking its allocated share of water feeding into Mono Lake, it might be responsible for dust kicking up off the drying shore, authorities in the Eastern Sierra

When dust storms began rising off the dry bed of Owens Lake, authorities in the Eastern Sierra blamed Los Angeles' thirst. The city had, after all, drained the lake in the 1920s to serve its faucets.

Now, as dust kicks up from Mono Lake, authorities in the Eastern Sierra are once again blaming that water-craving metropolis about 350 miles to the south.

But this time, they're also blaming climate change.

Since 1994, a landmark State Water Resources Control Board decision has capped L.A.'s diversions of the streams that feed Mono Lake, defusing for a time one of California's most protracted environmental battles.

Scientists say climatic shifts, however, are bringing less snow to the Sierra Nevada and less snowmelt to Mono Lake.

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