California Sleepwalks into Water Crisis

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When
California's Governor Jerry Brown ordered mandatory reductions in water use on April 1st, it came as no surprise in a state that's experienced an extended and unprecedented drought. Now in its fourth year, the drought has fueled groundwater pumping by farmers, lowering water tables, driving land subsidence, and damaging roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Snow-capped mountain ranges no longer have snow. Citizens in some smaller communities worry they'll loss access to water altogether. And banks and corporations are beginning to ask if they're now exposed to potential risks and losses. Against this backdrop, the governor's 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and last week's water-use cuts appear to many water experts to be too little too late. So what can California do to shore up its dwindling water supply?

California Sleepwalks into Water Crisis - Charles Iceland, Aqueduct/World Resources Institute

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Doc. Aqueduct / World Resources Institute

sources: Water stress, WRI
Aqueduct 2013; Irrigated lands, Ozdogan and Gutman 2008 sage.wisc.edu