

Southern California is currently facing the formidable task of providing continued access to safe and reliable water resources for a rapidly increasing population. In the past, California was able to take more than its share of water from the Colorado River because the sparsely populated states of Colorado, Nevada, and Arizona did not use all of their allotment.

Over the past few decades, the populations in those states have exploded and they are using more of that water, which means less for California. Of course, up in Northern California, between water restrictions to help save the Delta Smelt endangered fish and the farmers, Southern California is getting less from our in-state neighbors as well. With increased demand, decreased availability of imported water, and higher water quality requirements, future water supplies in our region have become increasingly limited and expensive.

Southern California water districts are taking important steps in examining water recycling, desalination, and conservation methods to efficiently manage our water supplies and produce non-traditional methods to produce dependable water sources. As regions up and down the state struggle to address the water supply and reliability needs of their communities, I am pleased to be part of a group of legislators and community leaders working to make the best use of the water that is available to us.

To significantly increase Southern California's supply of water, I have introduced the Santa Ana River Water Supply Enhancement Act of 2009 to authorize federal funding for a number of important local water projects. Specifically, this bill will improve Southern California's water supply by authorizing the federal government to fund the development of large-scale wetlands along the Santa Ana River in the Prado Basin to purify the River before it replenishes groundwater supplies. This expanded natural treatment system will provide an additional 24.5 billion gallons of water per year.

This bill also authorizes federal funding to expand groundwater desalination in the Chino Basin from the current 2.9 billion gallons per year to 13 billion gallons per year. This will provide a new fresh drinking water supply for several of our communities.

When complete, these projects will increase Southern California's water supply by billions of gallons per year. As a member on the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, I will continue to work with my colleagues to maintain and enhance a reliable water supply in Southern California and our nation. It is imperative that Congress address the chronic water shortages in Southern California by providing the funding resources necessary to help local water agencies improve water reliability and diversity.

GARY G. MILLER
Member of Congress