

# Water Worries



Tracy Quinn

After more than two years of drought, California may finally see relief with El Niño, a weather pattern that brings cooler, wetter winters to the southwestern U.S. Residents in that state are pushing for water security in more ways than natural rainfall dependency, however. *Water Quality Products* Editorial Assistant Chelsea Corbin recently spoke with Tracy Quinn, policy analyst for the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), about the drought and a poll that demonstrates voters' water

priorities. Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates conducted the 1,000-person survey on behalf of NRDC.

**Chelsea Corbin:** What was the goal of the poll and what are some of the most striking results?

**Tracy Quinn:** A recent poll conducted for the NRDC revealed that 92% of all Californians recognize just how severe this drought crisis is, and they want action now. Furthermore, the poll showed *how* California voters want drought-busting solutions. By an overwhelming margin of 74% to 17%, Californians believe the best way to tackle the drought with an eye toward long-term climate resiliency is to develop and stretch local water supplies, including recycling, employing water-efficient technologies and fixing long-neglected pipe and other water delivery systems. And 77% of voters would be willing to pay more on their water bill in order to increase sustainable local water supplies.

**Corbin:** What is the state currently doing to persevere through the drought?

**Quinn:** In his declaration of the drought emergency, Gov. [Edmund G.] Brown asked individuals to reduce water consumption by 20%, and water suppliers are working to provide customers with the knowledge and tools to accomplish this goal. Some innovative ways water suppliers are educating customers are by providing tools, like water use calculators, and quantifying how much water can be saved with various conservation measures, like taking shorter showers or replacing old toilets with high-efficiency ones.

**Corbin:** How can other regions learn from California's experience to become more water resilient?

**Quinn:** Other parts of the country should look to the regions of California that are faring better in this drought due to improvements in water efficiency and investments in regional supplies and storage. The key to being water resilient is to plan ahead by investing in a diverse portfolio of water supplies, including

conservation, water recycling, groundwater management and storm water capture.

**Corbin:** With climate change expected to induce more extreme weather, do you sense a growing urgency to develop drought-resistant societies?

**Quinn:** Yes, and there are many things we can do now to become more drought resilient in the future. Given the severity and far-reaching effects of our dwindling water supplies on cities, farms, native fisheries and the environment, we must learn to rethink how we use water in California. Some of the solutions that can get us there are the increased use of greywater and rainwater for flushing toilets and irrigating landscapes, the conversion of turf-based landscapes to drought-resistant gardens, and improvements in the efficiency of water-using products and appliances.

**Corbin:** How can individuals contribute to securing local water resources?

**Quinn:** One of the cheapest new sources of local water is conserved water. Individuals can contribute by making small changes to their daily activities, such as not watering lawns as often, taking shorter showers and replacing older, less-efficient products in their homes like clothes washers, toilets, faucets and showerheads with new, high-efficiency ones. *wqp*

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## Global Children's Bottled Water Report Released

Research and Markets added the "Global Children's Bottled Water 2014 Report" to its offering. Zenith's Global Children's Bottled Water 2014 Overview specifically focuses on the children segment within the bottled water category, providing a topical overview of trends in overall and children's bottled water consumption, challenges and opportunities, and the wide range of bottled water products for children offered in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East.



## EPA Modifies Engine Replacement Rule

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency modified its final rules to allow the use of new exempt engines to replace failed engines in water well drilling rigs up to 40 years old. This will allow the water well drilling industry to improve air quality while maintaining business operations. Industry members are advised to consult with applicable state rules, such as in California, for any additional state-level requirements.

## UNICEF Restores Drinking Water to Central African Republic

Just ahead of the onset of the rainy season, which increases the risk of waterborne diseases like cholera, UNICEF and its partners restored safe, chlorinated drinking water for more than 183,000 displaced people in the Central African Republic (CAR). In 2014, UNICEF is requesting \$62 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children in CAR, which includes \$14 million to cover water, sanitation and hygiene needs.



## California Town Taps New Source of Water

Rowland Water District (RWD) is accessing the first new groundwater source since it was formed more than 60 years ago. The supply is from the Central Basin area of southeast Los Angeles County, and was developed through a partnership with three other water districts. An interconnection was constructed to allow RWD access to the groundwater supply coming directly from La Habra Heights County Water District.

## World Water Monitoring Challenge Monitoring Period Opens

World Water Day 2014 on March 22 marked the start of this year's monitoring period for the Water Environment Federation and International Water Assn.'s World Water Monitoring Challenge, an international outreach program that builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world. From March 22 to Dec. 31, 2014, thousands of people worldwide are expected to connect with and monitor their local water bodies through a series of simple hands-on tests. *wqp*

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