



The Sierra Nevada mountains will receive multiple feet of snow and blizzard conditions this weekend.

Photo credit: <https://www.theweather.com/news/forecasts/extremely-snowy-weekend-with-blizzard-warnings-in-store-for-the-sierra-nevada-mountains.html>

California Water and Infrastructure Report For February 29, 2024

**(With expanded coverage of all the Western States)
by Patrick Ruckert**

Published weekly since July, 2014

An archive of all these weekly reports can be found at both links below:

<http://www.californiadroughtupdate.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDroughtUpdate>

For a free subscription to the weekly report: Send me an email-- patruckert@gmail.com

A Note to Readers

And it is another week of rain, snow, blizzards and probably more flooding in California. The drought is dead in California. But, like the walking dead, it will return to torture us some more. When? The past 20 years should give us some idea. The breaks from two decades of frequent droughts have been at the most two years. This is the second year now being mostly free of drought.

We begin the report with weather news, forecasts and warnings.

Then the March 1 measurement of the snowpack shows that the month of February has ended the snowdrought, at least for now.

Next, this article does make the argument stated in the headline, but other factors that delay the building of infrastructure are also at work. *“Where did the water go? 'Environmental lawsuits have had a very chilling effect' on CA water resiliency efforts.”*

What actually is the condition of California's infrastructure? *“The Failure of the New Age, Deregulated, Speculative Economy,”* provides some preliminary discussion of the question, using a new report from the *Los Angeles Times* published this week.

Here is a brief excerpt from the report, *“The High Cost of Underinvestment: Assessing the State of Infrastructure in Southern California.”* published this week by the *Los Angeles Times*. Next week I will give further coverage of this report.

Given that EVs depend upon government subsidies to be able to induce people and even governments to buy them, it is not a surprise to see this report: *“Jurupa Valley bus factory shuts, 425 jobs lost, latest victim of green-vehicle slump.”*

Finally, we have an update on the tech-billionaires attempted takeover of Solano Valley. The most thorough article yet, makes clear that the parasites are promising hundreds of billions, but as one official stated, promises are not enforceable.

The Sierra Nevada mountains will receive multiple feet of snow and blizzard conditions this weekend.



Photo credit: <https://www.theweather.com/news/forecasts/extremely-snowy-weekend-with-blizzard-warnings-in-store-for-the-sierra-nevada-mountains.html>

Cold storms headed for CA, including rare blizzard conditions in Sierra Nevada Fri-Sat

By [Daniel Swain](#) / February 28, 2024

Brief reality check: a quick look at the season thus far

Winter 2023-2024 has been warmer than average across nearly all of California, especially in the Central Valley, with the localized exception of pockets of the SoCal coastal plain. (climatetoolbox.org)

Winter 2023-2024 has turned out to be an eventful one despite a pretty slow start in December. Overall conditions have been substantially warmer than average across essentially all of CA, with some parts of the San Joaquin Valley seeing winter temperatures approaching seasonal records. Precipitation has been a bit more heterogeneous, with December starting out fairly dry in most places but January and February being extremely wet in some places. Overall, precipitation for the past 90 days has been

above average essentially everywhere within 100 miles of the CA coast and near to slightly below average inland across the Sierra Nevada (though that's going to change quickly in the next 72 hours!). Overall, DJF will end up warmer and wetter than average for most of CA's land area and the vast majority of its population (and JFM precipitation anomalies may yet be even higher on the wet side).

Blizzard Conditions Could Bury California Mountain Towns In Feet Of Snow

The biggest winter storm so far this season is set to slam the mountains of Northern and Central California with up to 10 feet of snow.

February 28, 2024

<https://corporate.accuweather.com/newsroom/severe-weather-advisories/severe-weather-advisory-february-28-2024/>

AccuWeather Global Weather Center – February 28, 2024

Residents, businesses, and visitors are urged to prepare for a powerful winter storm that will lead to lengthy travel disruptions and power outages in California's Sierra Nevada.

AccuWeather meteorologists say the combination of heavy snowfall rates of 2-4 inches per hour, combined with 40-60 mph wind gusts, will lead to blizzard conditions and a life-threatening situation for people caught unprepared in the storm.

Prepare for blizzard conditions

A blizzard is defined as a storm with falling or blowing snow, winds in excess of 35 mph, and visibility less than, or equal to, one-quarter of a mile for three consecutive hours or more.

March Snow Survey Shows Improvement for Sierra Snowpack

Published: Feb 29, 2024

https://water.ca.gov/News/News-Releases/2024/Feb-24/March-Snow-Survey-Shows-Improvement-for-Sierra-Snowpack?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

As California enters the last month of the traditional snow season, snowpack is near average in most regions

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today conducted the third snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. The manual survey recorded 47.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 18 inches, which is 77 percent of average for this location. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast.

Today's results reflect continued improvement in the snowpack since the slow and dry start to the water year. DWR's electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the state indicate that the statewide snowpack's snow water equivalent is 18.7 inches, or 80 percent of average for this date, an improvement from just 28% of average on January 1. The snowpack is currently only 70 percent of the critical April 1 average, when the snowpack is typically at its peak. An incoming storm is expected to bring several feet of snow to the Sierra Nevada this weekend.

What Blocks Building Infrastructure?

Where did the water go? 'Environmental lawsuits have had a very chilling effect' on CA water resiliency efforts

By [Donna Rolando](#)

Feb 27, 2024

<https://norcalrecord.com/stories/655077351-where-did-the-water-go-environmental-lawsuits-have-had-a-very-chilling-effect-on-ca-water-resiliency-efforts>

With a boost from the wettest January on record, California's [megadrought](#) is over.

But with torrents running out to sea, relief may be as short-lived as the next dry spell. Intensifying the problem is that California has not built a reservoir in approximately 50 years, and many water supply plans—if they survive strict governmental review—get tied up in court by environmental lawsuits.

As this litigation takes its toll, California finds itself with limited ammo for its war against recurrent droughts, which has hurt agriculture and forced rationing at times in the South. The most recent example involves a lawsuit filed last December targeting the Sites Reservoir, northwest of Sacramento, which several groups say will upset the ecosystem, according to a report published by [Courthouse News Service](#).

Edward Ring, author of [The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California](#), has studied the issue intensively as senior fellow with California Policy Center and director of the CPC's Californians for Energy and Water Abundance. In a recent interview with Northern California Record, Ring agreed these lawsuits are crippling and need to be curtailed.

“In general, the way the system is set up, environmental lawsuits have had a very chilling effect on the ability of Californians to develop the resilience and the water supply that we need to get through dry years,” he said, alluding to the state's alternating cycles of drought and deluge.

As stifling as these lawsuits can be, they're not the only force blocking water resiliency. Ring underscored that besides no new reservoirs, progress also lags on less controversial projects. This leaves conservation, which only goes so far, he said.

“You can't blame it all on the environmentalists,” Ring said. “It's a lot bigger than that.”

He cited everything from bureaucracy to funding hurdles and a lack of leadership as impediments to change. Bureaucracy, he said, involves dozens of state and federal agencies and elected officials, all sharing an environmental perspective that prioritizes conservation.

In his book, Ring recalls how in 2014, 67% of California voters approved Proposition 1 to finance water storage, yet almost a decade has lapsed without construction of a single project. Not only reservoirs but desalination plants have run into opposition, he writes, like the 50-million-gallon-a-day Huntington Beach project “held up by a mostly hostile bureaucracy and litigation for over 20 years.” California regulators rejected the \$1.4 billion plant in May of 2022.

The Failure of the New Age, Deregulated, Speculative Economy

Here is a brief excerpt from the report, “*The High Cost of Underinvestment: Assessing the State of*

Infrastructure in Southern California.” published this week by the *Los Angeles Times*. Next week I will give further coverage of this report.

The High Cost of Underinvestment: Assessing the State of Infrastructure in Southern California



(Dr. Wolfgang Ise/OutdoorPhoto - stock.adobe.com)

Jan. 3, 2024 2:32 PM PT

https://www.latimes.com/specialsupplements/story/2024-01-03/the-high-cost-of-underinvestment-assessing-the-state-of-infrastructure-in-southern-california?li_did=78f440d2-33d8-3e92-81f-83ced78b1d2f

By the Numbers

While aging infrastructure is a nationwide issue, the scale of problems within California infrastructure, and particularly in Southern California, is staggering. This is partly because of the sheer amount of systems that can be affected – California is the nation’s most populous state and the third-largest. But every two-lane desert highway and downtown interchange have something in common – they’re older, heavily used, and often underinvested in.

The hard numbers underscore these issues:

- ***Infrastructure Investment has declined 37%:*** *In the last decade, infrastructure investment in Southern California alone has decreased by more than a third. This has impacted the region’s ability to address critical infrastructure needs.*
- ***Southern California ranks 22nd nationally in infrastructure investment:*** *In comparison to other states, if Southern California were its own state, it would sit at 22nd in infrastructure investment and, incredibly, dead last in highway investments.*
- ***Commutes are 20-30% longer:*** *Since 1990, commute times have surged. The increase is especially stark for those in historically marginalized communities, with a 32% increase for Indigenous commuters and a 21% surge for Black commuters, as both cohorts are adversely affected by infrastructure underinvestment.*
- ***Half of SoCal bridges are at-risk:*** *Only 50% of the region’s bridges maintain a status of “good condition,” – signaling a concerning decline in bridge infrastructure.*
- ***Water losses are adding up:*** *Over half of our regional water systems are not meeting state standards for limiting water leakage, wasting over 84 million gallons of water per day in a part of the state where the liquid is a precious resource.*
- ***Spending on water infrastructure has been reduced by 38%:*** *Despite these mounting losses,*

since 2010, a staggering 38% decrease in spending on drinking water infrastructure has affected over a third of water systems in Southern California.

- **85,000 residents fall under a “failing” infrastructure classification, and 25% of systems, affecting 1.3 million residents are classified as “at-risk” or “potentially at-risk”:** These infrastructure failures also do or have the potential to affect BIPOC and historically underserved communities adversely.
- **Critical port infrastructure will cost \$5.7 billion:** Future infrastructure and investment needs for the region’s ports are estimated at \$5.7 billion over the next decade, emphasizing the substantial investment required for efficient goods movement.

The True Cost of Underinvestment

Too Damn Expensive, Even With Government Subsidies

Jurupa Valley bus factory shuts, 425 jobs lost, latest victim of green-vehicle slump

Early euphoria of various vehicles powered by alternative fuels is over



ENC bus factory in Jurupa Valley, Calif. (Source: Google Maps)

By [Jonathan Lansner](#) | jlansner@scng.com | Orange County Register

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<https://www.pressenterprise.com/2024/02/29/southern-california-bus-factory-shuts-latest-victim-of-green-vehicle-slump/>

[utm_email=B51014E1058465721575842378&lctg=B51014E1058465721575842378&active=no&utm_source=listrak&utm_medium=email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.pressenterprise.com%2f2024%2f02%2f29%2fsouthern-california-bus-factory-shuts-latest-victim-of-green-vehicle-slump%2f&utm_campaign=scng-pe-localist-eve&utm_content=curated](https://www.pressenterprise.com/2024/02/29/southern-california-bus-factory-shuts-latest-victim-of-green-vehicle-slump/?utm_email=B51014E1058465721575842378&lctg=B51014E1058465721575842378&active=no&utm_source=listrak&utm_medium=email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.pressenterprise.com%2f2024%2f02%2f29%2fsouthern-california-bus-factory-shuts-latest-victim-of-green-vehicle-slump%2f&utm_campaign=scng-pe-localist-eve&utm_content=curated)

In an era when clean public transportation has seemingly huge support, how can the makers of low-emission buses fail?

Tech-Billionaire Promises Are Not Legally Binding

The most thorough analysis and report on the Silicon Valley billionaires attempt to build a “15-minute city” in Solano County.

Tech-billionaire promises for a new city, from roads to water, are worth hundreds of millions of dollars — if they're binding

by [Levi Sumagaysay](#) and [Ben Christopher](#) February 22, 2024

<https://calmatters.org/economy/2024/02/california-forever-promises/>

In summary

California Forever CEO Jan Sramek says promises of new homes, jobs, investments are binding, but legal experts and elected officials are skeptical.

The city-from-scratch that tech billionaires want to build in Solano County is getting the hard sell, with the backers promising new housing, better jobs and more — promises that will cost in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars — plus a pledge that county taxpayers outside the new community won't have to pay for any of it.

The backers call these pledges, contained in a proposed countywide ballot initiative, “guarantees.” They say they'll be legally bound to honor them.

But skeptical legal experts and local officials dispute the idea that the project's developers will be obligated by law to deliver on the so-called guarantees. Because the issues would put California in uncharted territory, odds are some potential disputes would have to be resolved in court.

Despite taking part in some contentious town-halls and other public meetings, and [suing county farmers](#) they accuse of price-fixing, Sramek and California Forever are courting voters with wide-ranging “guarantees.”

Those promises — whose dollar amounts will gradually increase with the community's population, reaching the pledged totals at 50,000 residents — include:

- *Up to \$400 million in down-payment assistance to help Solano County residents buy homes in the new community and new affordable housing*
- *Up to \$200 million invested into the county's existing downtowns*
- *Up to \$70 million for college, training and educational programs for Solano County residents*
- *Thousands of new jobs that will pay 125% of the average annual income in the county*
- *An unknown sum for infrastructure for the new community, such as schools, a transportation system and more*

Skeptics abound.

“They can promise they can do a thing,” said Mary-Beth Moylan, a University of the Pacific law professor and expert on California initiatives, who said the promises are not legally binding. “But when you get into things like commitment of taxpayer money, that's not something they can guarantee.”

Solano County Supervisor Erin Hannigan represents Vallejo, and while she's not necessarily against the project, she agreed with Moylan. “I think (the promises promoters call guarantees) will falsely entice people to think this is a good thing” when she said there is not enough information for voters to make an informed decision. “Who's going to enforce it? You can't put a directive on a municipality.”