

California's mega-drought: don't blame just Mother Nature

By ACSH Staff — June 15, 2015

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of nuclear power in helping to ameliorate, to some extent, the disastrous drought now gripping California (and to a lesser extent, Oregon and Washington). Specifically, he notes the nuclear reactor at Diablo Canyon's supply of energy to the desalinization plant nearby as key in helping to provide desperately needed fresh water to the region. (The author is a consultant with specialties in environmental science and geology, and has worked for both environmentally-focused activist groups such as NRDC, as well as the chemical industry).

Perhaps more such desal plants would help to alleviate the drastic water restrictions and skyrocketing energy costs that are accompanying this historic drought. Unfortunately, that is not going to happen. In 1976, the state's voters forbade construction of any new nuclear facilities, out of baseless fear of nuclear power. *Au contraire*, in 2013 one-half of the state's nuclear facilities was permanently shut down due to excessive wear found in the facility's infrastructure (the [San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station](#) ^[2]). The remaining facility at Diablo Canyon accounts for approximately 18 percent of the state's energy supply. The decline in hydropower's contribution, coupled with the inability to construct more nuclear plants, has led, paradoxically, to a spike in both use of natural gas (counter to CA's strict green policies) and in the cost of electricity there. (For a peer-reviewed evaluation of nuclear energy, see ACSH's [publication here](#) ^[3].)

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross added this comment: The antipathy of the green movement to nuclear energy is completely irrational, even granting the validity of the movement's goal of reducing fossil

fuels. Nuclear is safe and clean. We say the same thing about fracking, but we d be foolhardy to promote that energy source now in CA, given the volume of precious water it requires. On the other hand, those who (for reasons of ignorant fear or personal gain, ie the organic lobby) regale against GMO agriculture might want to re-consider, given [the actual](#) [4] and [potential](#) [5] for drought-resistant crops thanks to that technology.

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[1] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2015/06/09/californias-megadrought-nuclear-power-to-the-rescue/>

[2] <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/02/07/californias-green-energy-drought/>

[3] <http://acsh.org/2009/03/nuclear-energy-and-health-and-the-benefits-of-low-dose-radiation-hormesis/>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2015/06/jane-brody-on-gmos-theyre-good-for-people-and-the-planet/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/2014/03/california-town-representative-unrelenting-droughts-travails-biotech-helped/>