

Draft narrative: Current Trends

Economic and Financial

Population and land use - In 2050, nearly 60 million people live in California. The state's metropolitan areas have continued to grow, spreading boundaries and absorbing once-rural areas like the Sierra Nevada foothills. Limited and expensive land forces families to look for affordable homes in the state's interior valleys. Commuters spend more time getting to and from work. Still, Californians have not abandoned the mild-temperature coastal areas. The state's population growth in these areas has been more than twice that of any other state.

Economy and Housing - Despite periodic downturns, California's economy remains robust. The state continues to be a leader in technology with increased employment in research and development. Average household incomes continue to rise.

Agriculture - Irrigated crop land has decreased in some areas where urban development and natural resource restoration have increased. Some agricultural lands remained in production with land conservation agreements. Through a combination of advanced agricultural practices (e.g., multi-cropping) and technology, the agriculture industry has been able to increase the intensity of production as it also shifts to higher value permanent crops.

Institutional and Political

California's water planning and management integrates water supply and quality, flood protection, ecosystem restoration, climate change, and land use. Agencies share water management information and analysis, many through web-based technologies. Stakeholder participation in water management decisions continues to increase.

Natural Systems

Climate - Global climate change has affected California's natural systems. Sea level rise has begun to disrupt ecosystems and communities in coastal areas and ongoing tidal wetland restoration. The biggest impact is in the Delta where levees protect low-lying lands, many which were already below sea level. Air temperatures have increased throughout the state, and precipitation patterns have become more variable. Loss of mountain snowpack is significant, and peak river flows occur earlier in the spring. Groundwater basins in regions that experience dry conditions are at risk of overdraft.

Water Quality - Water quality is generally good, but some areas continue to face water quality problems. Some rural areas lack access to good quality water due to natural conditions or legacy pollution.

Technological

Water and energy are inherently linked, especially in California. Technology has modestly decreased energy use in water treatment and distribution. Water treatment technology allows more cost-effective clean up of groundwater and brackish water. Meanwhile, some advancement in residential appliances and irrigation technology has increased water use efficiency.