



**Briefing by the Pacific Institute on *The Untapped Potential of California's Water Supply***

**Background**

In June, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Pacific Institute released the results of recent work on the potential water supply that can be gained from urban and agricultural water use efficiency, water reuse, and stormwater capture. The document, *The Untapped Potential of California's Water Supply: Efficiency, Reuse, and Stormwater*, examines the gap between water supply and use in California and concluded that an unsustainable amount of water is diverted from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta each year and many aquifers throughout the state suffer from chronic overdraft. According to the report, the gap between supply and use from these two sources is more than 6 million acre-feet per year.

To deal with California's significant challenges, the issue brief presents several strategies. Improving agricultural water use efficiency could reduce water use by 5.6 million to 6.6 million acre-feet per year. Improving urban water use efficiency could reduce urban use by 2.9 million to 5.2 million acre-feet per year. Expansion of water reuse has the potential to generate 1.2 million to 1.8 million acre-feet per year, particularly in coastal communities. The capture and beneficial use of stormwater in urban areas could increase water supplies by 420,000 to 630,000 acre-feet annually. Together, the research strategies outlined would provide 10.8 million to 13.7 million acre-feet of water per year through new supplies and demand reductions. The methods through which water savings can be achieved vary by region.

Dr. Peter Gleik, President and Co-founder of the Pacific Institute, will provide a presentation on the issue brief and the potential for increasing water supply in California.

**Contact**

Sue Sims  
Executive Officer  
California Water Commission  
(916) 653-5544