

'Not that simple': Trump drags Canadian river into California's water problems



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Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump promised "more water than you ever saw" to Californians, partly by tapping resources from a Canadian river.

"You have millions of gallons of water pouring down from the north with the snow caps and Canada, and all pouring down and they essentially have a very large faucet," Trump said on Friday.

Trump was holding a press conference at a golf club he owns near Los Angeles.

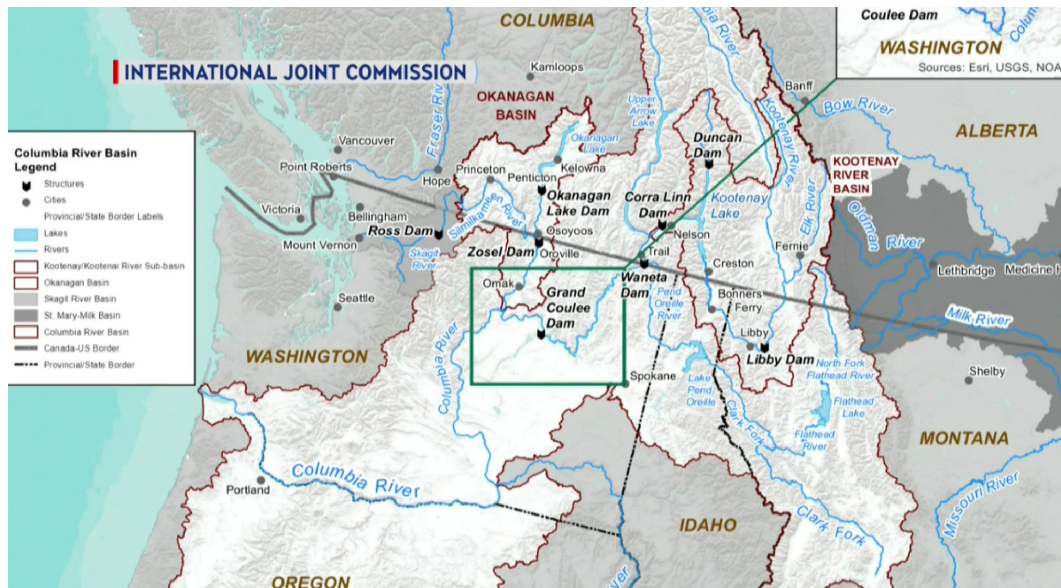
"You turn the faucet and it takes one day to turn it, and it's massive, it's as big as the wall of that building right there behind you. You turn that, and all of that water aimlessly goes into the Pacific (Ocean), and if you turned that back, all of that water would come right down here and into Los Angeles," he said.

Tricia Stadnyk, an environmental engineering professor at the University of Calgary who has researched continental water resource supply and is also a Canadian research chair in hydrologic modelling, says it's "not that simple."

"To me, it's an uninformed opinion. It's somebody that doesn't fully understand how water works and doesn't understand the intricacies of allocating water not only between two countries but also for the environment," Stadnyk said.

According to Stadnyk, Trump is talking about the Columbia River, which gets its water from Columbia Lake, located south of Invermere, B.C.

The river eventually drains into Oregon before ending up in the Pacific Ocean.



"It provides water to both countries from B.C., from our snow dome glacier or Athabasca Glacier, down into the U.S. (opens in a new tab)," she said.

Stadnyk says currently, the water from the Columbia River doesn't make its way into California, and doing so is not as easy as Trump says it would be.

"The U.S. does not get to dictate sole-handedly how much water goes to the U.S. versus how much water stays in Canada," Stadnyk said.

"There is not a lot of water in any system just sitting there to be had. We are over-allocated in almost all our systems, for the increases in population that we have and the demands and uses of our water supply, both in Canada and the U.S.," she said.

The consequence would have everlasting impacts on the ecosystem, according to Stadnyk.

She also says a project would cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

"We can't just be taking water and diverting it and sending it somewhere else. Besides that, every time that we're asked to do that, it's a sign that we're living outside of our means," she said.

Stadnyk was perplexed when Trump mentioned a "giant faucet."

She thinks he was referencing the headwaters of the Columbia River, which is fed by a snow dome.

"(The snow dome) is the only one in the world that actually drains to three oceans," she said.

Lisa Young, a professor of political science at the University of Calgary, says it's surprising Trump is even campaigning in the traditionally democratic state.

"We've certainly seen President Trump on a variety of issues, telling audiences things that they want to hear and presenting them with a great degree of certainty that isn't necessarily grounded in facts, and this clip certainly looked like another instance of that," she said.

CTV News reached out to Trump's press team for clarification on his claims but did not hear back by deadline.

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/not-that-simple-trump-drags-canadian-river-into-california-s-water-problems-1.7040126>

