

# Los Angeles Times

California

## Trump social media claim of using troops to force water flow is refuted by California

By Clara Harter and Ian James

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The Central Valley Project includes the Delta-Mendota Canal, left, in Firebaugh. (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

President Trump on Monday night heightened his battle with California over water policy by suggesting U.S. military troops had arrived in the state to turn on pumps and send more water flowing — something state officials quickly denied.

On Monday evening, Trump wrote that the military “just entered the Great State of California and, under Emergency Powers, TURNED ON THE WATER flowing abundantly from the Pacific Northwest, and beyond,” in a post on his social media platform Truth Social.

The California Department of Water Resources responded in a statement: “The military did not enter California. The federal government restarted federal water pumps after they were offline for maintenance for three days. State water supplies in Southern California remain plentiful.”

Trump’s post came after he signed an order directing federal agencies to “maximize” water deliveries in California and “override” state policies if necessary, and following a long-standing debate with Gov. Gavin Newsom over the state’s water management policies.

Trump has lambasted Newsom, saying he has held back water supplies in California and impeded the response to Los Angeles' recent wildfires. Newsom and state departments have repeatedly denied these claims, noting that there is a plentiful supply of water in Southern California.



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“Water supply has not hindered firefighting efforts,” the Assn. of California Water Agencies said in a statement Monday. “Reservoirs in California are at or above average storage levels for this time of year, thanks in part to years of proactive water management.”

Trump’s [executive order](#), issued Friday, outlines steps intended to increase the amount of water pumped from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

The order, posted on the White House website Sunday, directs the Interior and Commerce secretaries to “immediately take actions to override existing activities that unduly burden efforts to maximize water deliveries.”

It calls for delivering more water via the federally managed Central Valley Project, one of the two main systems of aqueducts, dams and pumping facilities in California that transport supplies from the Delta southward. The president also directed the federal Bureau of Reclamation to ensure state agencies “do not interfere.”

In the order, Trump criticizes “disastrous” policies and water “mismanagement” by California, and directs federal agencies to scrap a plan that the Biden administration adopted last month establishing new rules for operating the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project — California’s other main water delivery system in the Central Valley.

Instead, Trump has told federal agencies to more or less follow a plan adopted during his first presidency, which California and environmental groups challenged in court, arguing it failed to provide adequate protections for endangered fish.

Trump has said he intends to try to weaken environmental protection measures, and has questioned why the state should keep certain flows in rivers to help species such as the delta smelt, “a little tiny fish.” It’s one of several threatened and endangered fish species in the Delta, including steelhead trout, two types of Chinook salmon, longfin smelt and green sturgeon.

He doubled down on his criticism in his Monday evening post, writing, “The days of putting a Fake Environmental argument, over the PEOPLE, are OVER. Enjoy the water, California!!!”

Trump has repeatedly claimed that the wildfires in Southern California underscore why the state should be delivering more water south from the Delta. But water managers and experts have said

Southern California's cities are not currently short of water, pointing out that the region's reservoirs are at record-high levels following plentiful deliveries of supplies in 2023 and 2024.



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[Trump wants to upend California water policy. State officials say it could do harm.](#)

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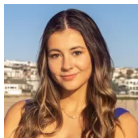
State officials have also said that pumping to move water south from the Delta has nothing to do with the local fire response in Los Angeles. The governor's office [said on social media](#) that California "pumps as much water now as it could under prior Trump-era policies," and that "there is no shortage of water in Southern California."

Even with ample supplies in reservoirs, local water systems were pushed to their limits in places as the fires rapidly spread, driven by strong winds.

When the L.A. water system [lost pressure](#) in parts of Pacific Palisades, some fire hydrants [ran dry in high-elevation areas](#), hindering the firefighting effort. Newsom has [ordered an investigation](#) into the loss of water pressure to hydrants, and the lack of water available from a reservoir in Pacific Palisades that was [out of commission for repairs](#).

Trump's executive order focuses largely on the federally operated Central Valley Project, one of the state's two main water delivery systems in the region, which transports water from the Delta to farmlands that produce almonds, pistachios, tomatoes and other crops.

The CVP ends in the southern San Joaquin Valley near Bakersfield and does not reach Southern California's urban areas to the south.



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