

## California, U.S. officials sign big water-use pact

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Marking at least a temporary end to the struggle over California's most precious water resource, Gov. Pete Wilson and the Clinton administration agreed Thursday to protect the Sacramento Delta estuary and provide reliable water supplies to farms and cities statewide.

Flanked by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator Carol Browner, Wilson declared that the three-year accord "signals a cease-fire in the water wars that have too long plagued California."

The agreement requires that consumers give up more water for environmental protection of the delta at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and a host of

lesser Northern California streams — about 1.1 million acre-feet in severely dry years and about 400,000 acre-feet in normal years.

But the agreement closely parallels proposals by a coalition of urban and agricultural interests. And it will provide "an affordable and reliable future water supply," said John R. Wodraska, general manager of the Metropolitan Water District, which delivers water to 16 million Southern California customers.

"This is really a big deal for California agriculture," said Dan Nelson of the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority, one of the largest water users in the Central Valley.

The agreement has been coming together for several months, but pulling it off required a final week of marathon negotiations and significant federal concessions.