



# Compromise Before The Water Runs Dry



## Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our Web calendar.](#)

### TUE | Oct. 9

Referral Network  
Grow your business  
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### TUE | Oct. 9

L.A. Export Series #3  
International Matchmaking  
[more info](#)

### WED | Oct. 10

Small Business Owners  
Roundtable  
Let's Talk Growth  
[more info](#)

### WED | Oct. 10

Trade Briefing: Building  
Bridges with Chile  
[more info](#)

### WED | Oct. 10

2007 Cash For College:  
College and Career  
Convention  
[more info](#)

### WED | Oct. 10

Aviation Committee Meeting  
New Technology Briefing  
[more info](#)

### THU | Oct. 11

2007 Cash For College:  
College and Career  
Convention  
[more info](#)

### FRI | Oct. 12

Health Care Committee  
Meeting  
[more info](#)

### FRI | Oct. 12

Special Briefing with U.S.  
Dept. of State Assistant  
Secretary Daniel S. Sullivan  
[more info](#)

### MON | Oct. 15

Joint Transportation & Goods  
Movement Committee and  
International Trade &  
Investment Committee  
Meeting  
[more info](#)

### MON | Oct. 15

Energy, Water &  
Environment Committee  
Meeting  
Featuring State Sen. Joe  
Simitian and LADWP Director of  
Water Resources Thomas Erb  
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber  
of Commerce is the voice of  
business in L.A. County.  
Founded in 1888, the Chamber  
promotes a prosperous  
economy and quality of life in  
the Los Angeles region. For  
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A recent survey by the Public Policy Institute of California found that 29 percent of likely voters approve of how the state Legislature is doing its job, down from a 37 percent approval rating at the beginning of the year. The Legislature now has a golden opportunity to regain some standing with the public. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has called a special session to deal with one of the state's most pressing issues – water. It would be disastrous if deliberations become bogged down along the same partisan, ideological lines that have soured the public on the Legislature.

Two-thirds of California is facing an increasingly uncertain water future because of problems in the [Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta](#). About 30 percent of Southern California's overall water supply flows through the Delta, the merging point of the rivers of the Sierra Nevada. It is a vital estuary that is facing stresses on several fronts. Native fish species have declined to low numbers. Non-native species are consuming much of the water's food supply. And levees protecting islands within the Delta are increasingly vulnerable to a Katrina-style disaster from flooding or an earthquake. If these levees fail, salt water from San Francisco Bay will rush in and render the State Water Project water supply relied upon by residents of the Bay Area, Central Valley and Southern California undrinkable for months.

Already, a federal court in Fresno has curtailed water exports to Southern California by up to 30 percent for the coming year to protect an endangered species of fish. And there is no expecting the problem to go away until a massive restoration effort is launched and a smarter, more flexible water system in the Delta constructed. It is the kind of complicated problem begging for leadership in Sacramento.

All sides need to compromise. Democrats are reluctant to invest in surface storage projects and along with environmentalists, seem skittish to confront head-on the growing evidence that a new canal for the Delta would both restore a natural flow regime within the Delta and help regain a reliable water supply. Republicans are supporting more than \$5 billion in state bonds for surface storage projects even though these projects do not fix the environmental problems with the Delta. Environmental groups, meanwhile, have been effective at filing lawsuits to curtail water deliveries from the Delta, but they have yet to articulate a solution other than conservation. A more efficient use of water is sound policy, but it is hardly the kind of comprehensive solution that the citizens of California demand.

A blend of all the perspectives across party lines could create the kind of centrist, sensible approach to problem-solving that the mainstream public seeks out of the political system. Fiscal realism is a must, but so is the willingness to invest in cost-effective water solutions. Conservation is key, but so is a storage and Delta delivery system that can draw reliable supplies in wet years so that the economy can survive the dry cycles. It is time for all sides to get past their cherished ideologies and take action before our state runs out of water.

And that's the Business Perspective.



Gary L. Toebben  
President & CEO  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

*The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.*

by Gary  
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Commerce

## L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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