



# GLASS HALF EMPTY

**W**hile El Nino certainly did not bust the state's record five year drought, it has brought significant precipitation to Northern California watersheds. Redding has received 108 percent of normal average precipitation while the Sacramento area received 89 percent of normal. Snowpack in the Northern Sierras was measured at 71 percent on April 1.

As a result, major Northern California reservoirs are now above historic averages for this time of the year. In fact, Northern reservoirs are so full they have had to dump water to keep ample room for flood control management.

However, Mother Nature's gift is not getting to where it is needed most, to San Joaquin Valley farms and the 25 million Californians who depend on the Delta for their drinking water supplies.

There is a lot more water in the system this year. As of April 6, 23,174,900 acre feet (or 7.5 trillion gallons) has flowed into the Delta. Of that, just 4,341,700 acre feet has flowed to water users. More than 16,511,800 acre feet has flowed out to sea, including 996,000 acre feet that has been lost due to pumping constraints imposed to protect fish species that have so far proven to be largely ineffective. As a result, San Luis Reservoir is at just 51 percent of capacity. California's water system is broken.

**Even the most positive optimist cannot see anything other than a half-empty glass under those circumstances.** Adding insult to injury,

Central Valley Project water users south of the Delta are getting just a paltry 5 percent of their normal surface water supplies. It's time to recognize that current state policies are broken. State officials need to improve the water system through a series of actions including regulatory flexibility, improved conveyance and more storage.



Folsom dam releasing water for flood control March 12, 2016  
Photo Credit: Torey Philipp



San Luis Reservoir at 51% of capacity March 25, 2016