

A new water tax? California has a \$21 billion surplus, use that instead

PHILLIP CHEN MAY 18, 2019



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California has a record \$21.5 billion surplus.

That's the good news. The bad news is that we have all that money because you are being overtaxed.

Earlier this month, Gov. Gavin Newsom released his revised budget proposal, the largest in California history.

At a staggering \$214 billion dollars, the budget is larger than that of most nations and every other state.

The budget also includes a new \$140 million tax on water customers to help all Californians have access to clean water.

Clean water is important, and there are a million people in the Central Valley without access to it. But do we need a new tax to pay for it? Maybe we don't.

Just last week, a state Senate budget subcommittee eliminated Gov. Newsom's recommendation for a water tax and replaced it with a \$150 million continuous appropriation from the General Fund.

This ensures reliable funding for years to come without increasing taxes. Obviously, we will be watching carefully to ensure that these dollars are in the state budget expected to be signed into law next month.

A General Fund solution makes sense, especially considering that the state surplus is 1,529 times what is needed to cover the costs to ensure everyone has access to clean water. But even if this proposal doesn't make the final budget, there are other alternative sources of revenue.

Over the last four years, voters have approved two separate statewide water bonds, each of which designate hundreds of millions of dollars specifically for clean water projects.

Why can't the governor direct some of that money to clean water?

Why wasn't that done already by previous administrations?

Why is it that, whenever the state misallocates our tax money, the taxpayers get hit again?

The tax could cost some Californians an additional \$10 a month, at a time when families statewide are struggling to pay record-high gas prices and other costs for goods just to survive.

Californians are drowning in taxes and high costs.

It's no wonder many are looking at moving to more affordable states such as Texas and Arizona.

A Quinnipiac University Poll from February 16 found 43 percent of California's voters felt they couldn't afford to live in the Golden State. Among voters 18 to 34 years old, 61 percent said they couldn't afford to live here.

The great California exodus to other states is already underway and many experts are predicting the Golden State will lose one congressional seat after the 2020 U.S. Census.

This means lower representation for our state in Congress and fewer federal dollars to help pay for infrastructure projects, education and public safety.

Additionally, if we lose younger generations to other states due to high costs, there will be a "brain drain" that will impact every sector of industry in California.

We can, however, start changing course today by saying “no” to new taxes like the water tax, and instead work together to make the Golden State more affordable for all Californians.

If you are fed up with high taxes, we implore you to take a stand and contact your state legislators and Gov. Newsom to let them know that enough is enough.

Say “No” to the new water tax and say “Yes” to using the General Fund to ensure that all Californians have access to clean water.

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