

California's water law was developed in the 19th century. It has not been comprehensively reformed since, despite substantial population growth, changing social values, and the appointment 45 years ago of a blue-ribbon commission to recommend changes. Now the "new normal" of the anthropocene promises reduced water availability coincident with increased demand.

It is past time for comprehensive reconsideration of California's water law system. Fellow Planeteer Rick Frank and I have been working with a diverse group of water law experts to come up with some initial recommendations for change. Today, we published [an op-ed](#) explaining some of those recommendations in CalMatters. The full report is [here](#).

At least some of the recommendations are getting some traction in the legislature. But perhaps the best outcome of this exercise would be appointment of a new blue-ribbon commission that would start its work with some legislative and executive buy-in to the need for truly comprehensive reform to help our 19th century water law better deal with our 21st century reality.