

Agricultural Water Conservation and Efficiency Potential in California



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Agriculture uses about 80 percent of California's developed water supply. As such a large user, it is heavily impacted by the availability and reliability of California's water resources. Agriculture can also play an important role in helping the state achieve a more sustainable water future. The challenge is to transition to an agricultural sector that supplies food and fiber to California and the world and supports rural livelihoods and long-term sustainable water use.

Water efficiency—defined as measures that reduce water use without affecting the benefits water provides—has been shown to be a cost-effective and flexible tool to adapt to drought as well as to address longstanding water challenges in California. Moreover, today's investments in efficiency will provide a competitive advantage in the future and ensure the ongoing strength of the agriculture sector in California. California farmers have already made progress in updating and modernizing irrigation practices. More can and should be done.