



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on January 10, 2025

Suspected Arsonist Arrested in California, Where Water Usage Is Once Again a Central Issue

Police have arrested a suspected arsonist who may have ignited one of several fires consuming Southern California.

[According](#) to Fox 11 Los Angeles, the suspect allegedly started the Kenneth fire, one of six razing the region. The Palisade, Eaten, Hurst, Lidia, and the most recent to flare up, Archer, fires are the other five. At least 10 people have died from fire-related causes, with 179,000 under evacuation orders and another 200,000 under an evacuation warning. The fires, which started Monday, have destroyed 10,000 buildings, making them the most destructive in Los Angeles history. An unknown number of residents have lost their homes, including some celebrities.



AP Images
Kenneth Fire

As of early Friday afternoon, the fires consumed a total 36,200 acres, with the Palisades taking up 20,400 acres and the Eaten 13,700. With only eight percent of the former and three of the latter fire contained, these numbers will likely rise. Containment refers to lines that firefighters established around the perimeter of the fire to prevent further spread. Fire crews have contained a larger percentage of the other, smaller, fires.

Unknown Cause

Authorities have not identified what ignited the fires, but strong Santa Ana winds of up to 100 mph coupled with more than eight months of inadequate rain undoubtedly created conditions for the intense infernos now ravaging the region. Transmission lines are another suspect. [According](#) to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "One major utility in the region, Southern California Edison, is examining whether transmission lines near the origins of the Eaton and Hurst fires sparked either blaze."

And, as if on cue, the experts have already allocated some of the blame to climate change.

"Because of the warming trend of climate change, the vegetation is a little bit drier and the fire season is a little bit later," Crystal Raymond, deputy director of the Western Fire and Forest Resilience Collaborative at the University of Washington, [told](#) *Time* magazine. "You get more of the chance for this dry season to then overlap with the Santa Ana wind season."

Even the globalists at the foreign policy think tank Council on Foreign Relations chimed in. On Thursday, Varun Sivaram [wrote](#) "The California wildfires offer a concrete example for how to apply an approach I call 'climate realism' to understanding the threat of climate change to U.S. interests and adopting a pragmatic stance in response."



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Trump Blames Newsom

President-elect Donald Trump, for his part, has already assigned some blame to the environmental crusaders and the leaders who kowtow to them, including California Governor Gavin Newsom. On Wednesday, Trump said on his Truth Social account,

Governor Gavin Newsom refused to sign the water restoration declaration put before him that would have allowed millions of gallons of water, from excess rain and snow melt from the North, to flow daily into many parts of California, including the areas that are currently burning in a virtually apocalyptic way. He wanted to protect an essentially worthless fish called a smelt, by giving it less water (it didn't work!), but didn't care about the people of California. Now the ultimate price is being paid. I will demand that this incompetent governor allow beautiful, clean, fresh water to FLOW INTO CALIFORNIA! He is [to] blame for this. On top of it all, no water for fire hydrants, not firefighting planes. A true disaster!

Newsom's press office denied the existence of a water declaration, saying, "There is no such document as the water restoration declaration — that is pure fiction. The Governor is focused on protecting people, not playing politics, and making sure firefighters have all the resources they need." Jeffrey Mount, a senior fellow in the Water Policy Center at the Public Policy Institute of California think tank, and Brent Haddad, an environmental studies professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, [told CNN](#) that there was never a "water restoration declaration" for Newsom to sign. Reports say state officials and even Republican legislators confirm this.

As for the part about the smelt fish, that is undeniably true. Newsom supports the [Delta conveyance project](#), which aims to protect smelt habitats in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Environmentalists have also become very aggressive and successful in stopping the clearing of deadfall from the state's forests, which has resulted in more available fuel for wildfires. In the name of preservation, environments have "choked" the rain forest, as one expert [put it](#).

Water Wars

Water is a big issue in the West, where droughts are as common as snow storms are in the Northeast. Regions in the West can go months with little to no rain. Combine that with California being home to one of the largest agricultural industries as well as some of the most rabid and ignorant environmentalists, and you have a recipe for intense water fights.

The [Water Education Foundation](#) lists 36 environmental groups in California dedicated to diverting water to various environmental causes. Some groups have even combined environmental pet causes with another favorite leftist crusade, identity politics. Communities for a Better Environment describes itself as a "nonprofit group working to achieve environmental health and justice by building grassroots power in and with communities of color and working-class communities."

Environmentalists say water must remain in rivers to protect various species, arguing that agricultural producers take too much and therefore reduce the natural flow needed for fish to survive. The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is a focal point, where water is diverted for agricultural and urban use.

Meanwhile, as far as agricultural producers are concerned, they continue to lose access to water. In



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2021, California's water board approved [emergency regulations](#) to stop thousands of farmers and landowners from diverting water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed. "The five water board members, who were appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom or former Gov Jerry Brown, approved the rule despite vehement opposition from representatives of Central Valley growers," [Cal Matters reported](#).

Republican state Senator Shannon Grove said the regulation would "disrupt the critical production of essential food.... Instead, the state should focus on expanding water storage and upgrading its existing water infrastructure, not punish local water managers." Democratic state Assemblyman Adam Gray dubbed orders for senior water rights holders "one of the most destructive measures possible."

In August of 2018, hundreds of California farmers converged at the state Capitol "to protest state water officials' proposal to increase water flows in a major California river, a move state and federal politicians called an overreach of power that would mean less water for farms in the Central Valley," the Associated Press [reported](#). The plan would have doubled the amount of water that had to flow through the Low San Joaquin River and three of its tributaries, leaving less water for farming. The intent of such a plan is to protect the state's declining salmon population.

Bad Government

On top of all the challenges created by nature and activists, Californians have added to their plight by electing bad leadership. In June, Governor Newsom signed a state budget that slashed funding for wildfire and forest resilience by \$101 million. "Cuts included a reduction of \$5 million in spending on CAL FIRE fuel reduction teams, including funds used to pay for vegetation management work by the California National Guard," *Newsweek* [reported](#). "An additional \$4 million was removed from a forest legacy program aimed at encouraging good management practices from landowners whilst \$28 million was slashed from funds provided to multiple state conservancies to increase wildfire resilience."



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