Fall Immersion: Midterm Pitch

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**Topic:** How effective have government measures to curb the California drought been?

**Story:** The California state government, led by governor Jerry Brown, has taken action over the past year to conserve water during one of the state’s worst droughts of the past century. Last December, Governor Brown formed a drought task force to manage water supplies before releasing a plan detailing how to deal with future instances of droughts and floods. In August, the government adopted a $7.5 billion water bond proposal. The most recent course of action was the signing of three bills on September 16 that allow local agencies to tailor sustainable groundwater practices to regional environmental and economic needs.

Governor Brown has also called on Californians to reduce their water usage by 20 percent. Websites such as [saveourwater.com](http://saveourwater.com) and [drought.ca.gov](http://drought.ca.gov) provide information on how to achieve this goal. But are these measures actually effective *right now*? Are water levels (excuse the pun) leveling out? The drought is obviously affecting people, but how many families are currently without running water? Will the number go up before it goes down? Will the environmental effects harm birds and fish and whole ecosystems – and therefore the people that rely on them for personal and economic use as well? Will a 20 percent reduction actually help? These questions do not need to all be answered but the idea is to delve into the issue.

To focus this story, it may be prudent to narrow in on Los Angeles County instead of the state as a whole. What is Los Angeles doing to curb the effects of the drought? Are information resources about conservation widely available? Are individuals taking real action to conserve?

**Potential Sources:** Man on the street interviews, representative from the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts (part of Department of Public Works), representative or assembly member that sponsored one of the three bills that Governor Brown recently signed, Mayor Garcetti/mayoral office representative.

**Form:** A story like this will likely be effective in a feature story form: a long article, 1,000-1,500 words. A secondary form could be a 1-2 minute video piece that brings together perspectives of local residents and politicians/officials.