Scenario 3
In 2050, California’s population is higher than the Department of Finance projected 50 years ago. Lower housing density has spread our urban borders. We see steeper declines in agricultural land. Climate change has followed more severe projections; there is less water for the environment. California has no additional regional water management.

Natural System
Since the early part of the century, the climate has changed in a manner consistent with the more severe predictions by the IPCC. In 2050, precipitation and snowpack are significantly reduced, and sea level in California has risen higher than anticipated just 50 years ago. The state’s ecosystems have lost biodiversity and abundance. Invasive species are wide spread.

The floodplains have become sites for many new urban developments.

Cultural Practices
Californians continue to demand housing in previously undeveloped areas of the coastal and Central Valley regions. Consumers do not embrace high water efficiency appliances and landscaping practices. Private investments are lower than expected for increasing water use efficiency.

The new generation of Californians has less interest in spending time outdoors and have less support for expanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Economic and Financial
Population and Land Use
California population has grown at a faster rate than projected by the Department of Finance. We have much more than 60 million in this year 2050. To accommodate those growing numbers, California urban areas have spread and moved into areas that were once rural and in areas susceptible to flooding and fire.

Cities and counties have no political mandate for compact urban development. Families and homeowners prefer low density housing with expansive lawns and other high-water use landscapes. Many seek rural residential properties. These development patterns have expanded urban areas, away from existing infrastructure.

Economy and Housing
California's economy experienced economic roller coasters in the early part of the century. Today, we experience even greater swings between boom and bust. Because of the high cost of living, more businesses have moved out of, than into the state. We’ve also experienced a decline in research and development. State or federal funding dedicated to water resources management and ecosystem restoration has been stagnant.

Agriculture
Millions of acres of irrigated agricultural land have been lost to conversion since the early part of the century. The rate has been more rapid than earlier trends indicated. This loss, potentially devastating to
the state’s economy, has been partially compensated with increases in agricultural intensity (e.g., multi-cropping) and shifts to higher value permanent crops. No statewide efforts have helped to maintain land in agricultural production through land conservation agreements. The Williamson Act is no longer in effect.

**Water Quality, Supply, and Use**

Significant water supply and quality challenges persist on local and regional scales. California’s water quality has not improved. Surface water and groundwater bodies experience more pollution and salinity than trends of 50 years ago. Groundwater overdraft is a serious problem in many areas. California is more susceptible to periodic episodes of supply restrictions, water quality degradation, and environmental impacts.

The new generation of Californians shows less of a will to protect water resources. They spend less time outdoors and have less support for expanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Institutional and Political**

Integrated regional water management and planning is not as inclusive as originally intended. Local land use planning and regional flood planning are not regularly included. There has been no significant improvement in floodplain management. Few agencies have updated planning practices to address climate change and instead simply react operationally to climatic changes. Planners share only limited water management information and analysis.

Nonpoint-source pollution continues to be a serious problem, but local governments and business oppose new water pollution regulations, citing high implementation costs.

Californians have been unable to reach a political consensus on solutions to improve the state's water management systems and ecosystem restoration. We settle disputes in court. Water needs are in competition: urban vs. agriculture vs. the environment.

California faces serious problems with State, regional, and local water infrastructure because of poor maintenance and upgrades. Periodically, water problems translate to supply restrictions, water quality degradation, and environmental impacts.

Many California interest groups are not able to participate actively in water management decisions. The closed process results in little public support for proposed water management actions. Consumers do not embrace high water efficiency appliances or landscaping practices.

**Technology**

The costs of providing clean and reliable water are higher than were expected just 50 years ago. The rising costs are tied to those of energy and water treatment. Neither have benefited from technology. Energy-saving technology and water treatment remain as they were in the early part of the century.

No technological breakthroughs have advanced water conservation. Today we have only modest water saving improvements.

Technology also has fallen short as a planning tool. Water agencies do not effectively use the Internet to share water management information.