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California's Problem in the 2000s

# Introduction

In the United States, California is located on the western coast which borders the Pacific Ocean. It is the third largest United States state by area. In California, the population is somewhat above 37.5 million which makes it the most populous state of the United State. Most people in California live in the urban areas which approximate to around 90%. Main industries in California include tourism, agriculture, electronics, entertainment, fishing, aerospace, and food packaging. Geography of California is very diverse, including long coastline, deserts, mountain ranges, and very long region of the valley. It also has very diversity in climate.

# Discussion

**Electricity Blackout**

Electricity consumption in California is fueled over half by natural gas. About 14% of the state electricity is provided by hydroelectric, renewable resources generate 11%, and other small percentages of electricity is generated using energy from nuclear reactors. California in the year 2000 & 2001 suffered back to back blackouts. The utilities of electricity are in the year 1990s deregulated. Due to this reason, the cost of electricity increases which poses serious problems related to finance for many electric utilities of the state. When a blackout occurs in the United States, investment had not been made significantly in building the new power plants and a significant amount of electricity has to be imported from surrounding states. When the drought occurs in the Pacific Northwest, available electricity for import has decreased significantly in an amount from power plants of hydroelectricity in the region. Rates of the electricity as a consequence rise in the market, making the other states related electric companies to show its reluctance to sell electricity to California. In addition to the price spike, the summer at that time of the year was way hotter than it usually is in that season spiking the electricity demands. Rolling blackout firstly hits the Bay area and then throughout it hits northern and central cities of California, and by the month of March 2001, the entire state. Blackout continued despite the intervention by the federal government which requires the companies to sell electricity to California. By the year 2003, measures of emergency nature reduced the situation urgency in California. But other blackouts have been experienced by the state since that time which includes the blackout of 2005 that is due to the failure of the transmission line. Blackout at that time left around 500,000 customers without electricity. Similar results occur in the year 2011 which blackout 1.4 million San Diego area.

Following the energy crisis in the year 2000-2001 in California, the government at that time makes a plan known as Energy Action Plan that ensures California's energy future security. The plan among other things called for measures that include increasing output of states electricity by building new facilities, grid infrastructure update, and encouraging conservation. It is also imposed by the states to enact 20% electricity requirement of California using renewable resources.

**Public Safety**

Public safety is the main function of the government. Yet many public safety problems have been noted in California. The prisons were overcrowded and new prisons were not built to cater to this problem. In the year 2005, the problem became very serious and the Supreme Court has to intervene in this matter giving its ruling to the states to reduce overcrowding in the prisons. Later administration of health care of prison is taken under the federal judge's control. To cater to this issue then governor shifted the new non-violent sentencing to the county jails.

**Drought**

One of the recurring features of California's climate is drought and the period 2011-2015 was termed as the driest since the record is been kept. High temperature makes the effects worse with the years 2014 and 2015 being the state hottest years recorded history. Governor Brown in January 2014, declared an emergency of the statewide level while establishing a team of the interagency draught response team. More than $3 billion were allocated through legislature using voters approved bonds to improve water management and provide relief from drought.

# Works Cited

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