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Water, Water, Everywhere Nowhere, and Not a Drop to Drink

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American College of Environmental Lawyers (ACOEL)

Early in my career, I was involved in a natural resource damages case seeking to establish the monetary value of an impacted drinking water aquifer. An environmental economist took the stand for the defense and began to describe why the resource had little economic value. About five minutes into the testimony, the judge—known to take matters into his own hands—interrupted the witness and said, “Sir, I do not know where you are from, but you are in the west and water is worth more than gold here.”

Currently, the western United States finds itself in extreme drought, the environmental, health, safety, and economic consequences of which are severe. This blog is not intended as a statement on climate change. While issues of climate change need to be addressed, the current situation requires immediate solutions, which a long-term climate movement is not likely to bring.

To read the ACOEL blog post, [click here](#).

Kevin Murray, Holland & Hart environmental partner and ACOEL officer. He has expertise on complex contamination issues, particularly those involving multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency matters in the real estate, mining, energy, petroleum, nuclear, and manufacturing industries. His practice focuses on managing environmental liabilities, repurposing real estate assets, and creating value through property remediation and planning.

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