

# TUWaterWays

Water News and More from the Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy  
July 8, 2014

## Buddy Can You Spare \$2,200 per Acre-Foot?

As California's drought deepens, the competition for water is also heating up. One upshot is the record prices that water is commanding in the state's water market. Unlike previous years, the state is not intervening to keep the prices low which is allowing persons with unused senior water rights (California is a prior appropriation state), ground water, or banked, salvaged or developed water to sell those waters for whatever they can get. Prices at auctions have reached [\\$2,200 per acre-foot](#) (the amount needed to cover an acre with water one foot deep). For farmers, families, fisheries managers, businesses, and communities accustomed to subsidized water rates this can be a shock. To illustrate the frustrating complexities of water markets, consider that groundwater in many places (including California and Louisiana) remains free, and a half-liter bottle of [FIJI water \(\\$8.82 per gallon\)](#) translates into \$2.9 million per acre-foot. New Orleans tap water comes in at a modest \$1,444 per acre-foot. It is enough to make one want to reach for a stiff drink.

## Report: Climate Change Poses Risks to U.S. Economy

It really isn't news any more when a group of scientists or activists issue a report soothsaying about the existence or nonexistence of climate change. But when a report claims as authors financial heavyweights as Michael Bloomberg, former Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, and former Secretary of State George Shultz (among others), it is noteworthy. Not because they or their [Risky Business](#) report break any new scientific ground but more because they portend a growing financial and business consensus that climate change is real enough for business to take seriously. At a time when rational discussion on this topic is increasingly hard to find, this business oriented perspective offers an important lens to view the state of our knowledge and options.

## Want to Be a Ten-Thousandaire? The New Orleans Water Challenge Is For You

If you ever had an idea that you thought might be the next big thing in water management or stewardship then your ship may have come in. The business incubator group [Propeller](#) is accepting applications for the 2015 Water Challenge that will award \$10,000 and valuable services to the best water-oriented business idea. The completion will be part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week that is sponsored by The Idea Village.

The **Tulane Institute on Water Resources Law and Policy** is a program of the Tulane University Law School.

The Institute is dedicated to fostering a greater appreciation and understanding of the vital role that water plays in our society and of the importance of the legal and policy framework that shapes the uses and stewardship of water.

## Coming up:

[Louisiana Water Resources Commission Meeting](#)

July 30, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

LaBelle Room, LaSalle Building

617 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

Baton Rouge, LA

[Restore America's Estuaries and Coastal Society Summit on Coastal and Estuarine Restoration](#)

November 1-6, 2014

Washington, DC

[Chicago Water Summit](#)

July 21, 2014

Chicago, IL

## Water jobs:

[Executive Director](#)

Center for Climate Change Law,

Columbia Law School

New York, NY

[Program Director](#)

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary

Program

Chauvin, LA

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Financial support comes from the Greater New Orleans Foundation. [Applications](#) are due by July 17, 2014.

### **Deep Thoughts on a River Clean Up**

100 feet deep, 13 miles long, and 26 feet in diameter to be more precise. Those are the dimensions the storm water storage [tunnel](#) that is being constructed in the District of Columbia next to the Potomac River to alleviate pollution levels in that river and the Anacostia River. The \$2.6 billion project is aimed at making those rivers “fishable and swimmable” again. Of course one may fish and swim there today, but it might not be smartest thing to do. By storing and treating the storm water, the District hopes that troublesome [combined sewer overflows](#) can be eliminated or significantly reduced so as to bring the District into compliance with the federal Clean Water Act. The complexity and cost of massive public works like this have prompted other cities such as Philadelphia to look more to “green infrastructure” like rain barrels and bioswales to complement or replace traditional pipe and pump systems. New Orleans is also exploring the greater use of a less-centralized approach to managing storm water.

### **Water Smuggling Ring Exposed?**

It is well known that commercial airliners have been used to smuggle drugs, weapons, and exotic animals, but who would have thought water? Passengers on a Qantas Airlines flight from Los Angeles to Australia could be forgiven for thinking that as they watched what has been described as a “[river](#)” of water flowing down the aisle of the airborne plane. Airline officials displaying a gift for understatement attributed the cascade to a leak. The plane returned to Los Angeles and no one was harmed. Whether the suctioned water was then sold for \$2,200 per acre foot was not mentioned.