**8th Grade Literacy Fusion Article: “A Major Earthquake Could Cripple Los Angeles' Water Supply”**

The Los Angeles metro area, home to more than 18 million people, could be one major earthquake along the famed San Andreas fault away from losing most of its water supply and causing a $50 billion economic disaster. That's because Los Angeles gets 88 percent of its water from the Colorado River, Owens River Valley and the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta, all hundreds of miles away, transported to the area via three aqueducts (Colorado River Aqueduct, Los Angeles Aqueduct and California Aqueduct) that, combined, cross the San Andreas Fault 32 times, reports the Los Angeles Times.

A study conducted by the Los Angeles Mayor's office found that a magnitude-7.8 earthquake along the San Andreas fault could disrupt the city's water supply for 15 months, causing a massive water shortage that could last six months, causing $50 billion in economic losses alone. "The water system is the utility most vulnerable to earthquake damage, and that damage could be the largest cause of economic disruption following an earthquake," the mayor's report reads in part. "Portions of the system are more than a century old and vulnerable to many types of damage. Lack of water would impede recovery and the long-term loss of a water supply could lead to business failure and even mass evacuation."

Indeed the city says it took nine years for Los Angeles' water system to recover completely from the magnitude-6.7 Northridge Earthquake (seen in the slideshow above), centered just to the northwest of Los Angeles in 1994, and that quake wasn't along the San Andreas fault.

As a result, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti is trying to prioritize protecting and backing up the three aqueducts as a part of his larger plan, dubbed "Resilience by Design," to protect the city's infrastructure from the "Big One." Resilience by Design outlines a number of recommendations for preventing the worst possible scenario should an earthquake strike, including increasing local backup water sources, retrofitting local piping with "seismic resilient" pipes to prevent damage to aging infrastructure and proposing a"Seismic Resilience Water Supply Task Force" involving the various agencies in charge of the aqueducts to come up with a plan to protect aqueducts from damage.

What ideas come to fruition remains to be seen, but Garcetti appears committed to providing money and resources to accomplish a modern makeover of the city's infrastructure.

"This [plan] is not intended to simply be the latest 'blue ribbon commission' report that sits on a shelf," Garcetti said. "It’s designed so that government, property owners, and commercial and residential tenants can come together to strengthen Los Angeles against a known and major threat to life, property, and our economy."  
  
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