

THE GREAT LOS ANGELES WATER CRISIS: IT'S TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT DESALINATION

Engineer and Inventor Brian Nissen is a renewable energy expert who has built a sustainable solution for California's paralyzing drought

Portland, Oregon— October 12 2017. One of the darkest chapters in Los Angeles' history is the story of its water supply; who brought water to the desert in the first place, and by what means. Since the Owens Valley water heist of 1913 was immortalized in the seminal film "Chinatown," immense controversy continues to loom over California's ever expanding water problems. To the powers that be, the question of whether to continue desalination efforts is so controversial, the agencies that control California's water usage cannot reach a unified decision. That is not the case with everyone.

Portland based Engineer, Brian Nissen, remains undaunted in his efforts to garner support for his renewable energy invention that he believes will help spur the Golden State's water reserves. Brian and his wife, Bella, have spent more than a decade on pro-bono problem solving, and poured nearly \$100,000 of their own money working toward a viable water solution. They live in Oregon, a state known for its environmental entrepreneurship.

Nissen was granted a patent for his renewable energy system that will allow California to reduce prohibitive costs of water purification. Since California's farming and agricultural industries largely feed the nation and literally depend on water, this is no small feat. "Southern California is the best place for my technology because that's where conveyance requires the most energy," Nissen said. "Desalination itself is not a new idea. What's new is that I am using hydropower to energize a desalination plant that will generate 188 million gallons of water per day before any electricity is used. Solving the California water crisis while being environmentally responsible is my goal."

Since California's coastline sits atop the biggest source of water in the world, the Pacific Ocean, there are already half a dozen desalination plants in California, and around 300 in the U.S. But the technology has been held back by cost and by environmental concerns. Aware of the major carbon footprint that desalination can have, Nissen said, "the solution to the California water issue is not a small problem, the size of the problem requires a big cure."

Right now, Nissen's major concern is getting an audience to listen to the merits of his invention, "You can't have an honest conversation. You can't even get to the conversation that you need to have. You can't get through the door," he said. "The whole point," he added, "is that we need to put the heat on politicians through the public voice. It seems that is how change always happens."

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