

The L.A. Colding Lecture Series

in Environmental Science and Technology

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Will China Run Out of Water?

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Abstract:

The American agricultural expert and environmentalist Lester Brown published a provocative book in 1995 called "Who Will Feed China: Wake-Up Call for a Small Planet." Today, however, of a greater concern may be the question of whether the unprecedented economic growth in China over the past two decades can be sustained as the environmental pollution and water shortage continue to worsen. Some people have asked, "Will China run out of water?" This question is not merely academic: China has to nourish a fifth of the global population with about seven percent of the planet's water resources. Ample evidence suggests that China faces a daunting water resource crisis. This presentation will take a close look at the current water situation in China and discuss the options available to deal with the worsening water shortage problem. The presentation draws on the presenter's recent research work in the north and northwest China.



Ludvig August Colding was Copenhagen's city engineer in the period 1857–1886 and designed the city's water supply system. He chose to base the supply entirely on groundwater. The system's general layout and many of its details date back to Colding's era. From 1869–1886, Colding was a professor at the Technical University of Denmark. At the age of 26, he discovered the law of conservation of energy, simultaneously with, but independently of Joule.

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