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## NID hears from supporters, detractors of Centennial Reservoir at scoping meeting

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The first scoping meeting for NID's Centennial Reservoir project was standing-room only. NID officials want public comment for an Environmental Impact Report they're compiling.

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NID board secretary Lisa Francis Tassone

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Grass Valley, CA, 95945

water needs. Opponents question the reservoir's need, asking how it would affect recreation, traffic and property rights.

Dianna Suarez barely spoke a few sentences at the first public scoping meeting for NID's Centennial Reservoir project before people began applauding.

Then she began to dig into the project she strongly opposes.

"If this project were to go through, there will be no river left," said Suarez, adding later, "How will removing wildlife from the habitat protect it?"

Suarez blasted the proposal that, if approved, would lead to a \$200 million to \$300 million reservoir on the Bear River, between the existing Combie and Rollins reservoirs. Completion is expected by 2023.

The Wednesday scoping meeting was part of NID's efforts to gather public comment necessary for the project's Environmental Impact Report. That EIR will be available for public review early next year. The NID board is expected to vote on it in 18 to 24 months.

Nevada Irrigation District officials say the reservoir would address the effects of anticipated climate change, periodic droughts and future

Speaking at the meeting, Suarez called the Bear River habitat a sacred place.

"The economy of our town is largely dependent on the Bear River," said Suarez, who lives in Placer County.

More than 200 people attended the meeting in a standing-room only ballroom at the Grass Valley Holiday Inn. Many speakers shared Suarez's concerns.

Eric Rice said he worries about losing access to Colfax, fearing the Dog Bar Road connection would be lost. He's also concerned about the reservoir negatively impacting recreation opportunities.

Remleh Scherzinger, NID's general manager, said Thursday that an improved river crossing would be constructed near the existing Dog Bar Road bridge.

Joy Waite, of Chicago Park, asked NID officials to ensure all costs for the reservoir are included in its budget, not just construction costs. She listed a few of the expenses she expects to see: land purchases required for the reservoir, new roads and bridges and a pipeline along Dog Bar Road.

Jeff Litton, a volunteer with the South Yuba River Citizens League, passed out literature about the reservoir before the meeting began. It listed how people can have their comments included in the EIR, topics they could address and alternatives to the project.

"Everyone is here because it impacts them in one way or another," he said. "That's why there's such a drastic response. That's why every seat is filled."

Several other attendees supported the project.

James Coe said if NID can provide affordable water, developers would be discouraged from building in open spaces. That would preserve the district's agricultural areas.

The reservoir also would create a fire break, a point NID officials also highlighted.

"The common good demands that lake," Coe said.

Jim Garrett has concerns about the project, transportation and recreation among them, though he supports the reservoir.

"Fundamentally, we need more water," he said.

Doug Roderick, with NID, said the district over the years has relied more on storage, creating a bigger need to capture runoff from rain and snow storms. The Centennial Reservoir would mitigate climate change and future droughts, enabling the district to meet projected water needs.

"This is part of a bigger picture," Roderick said.

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