

NID bargains with Centennial Dam opponents



Matthew Pera
December 4, 2017

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Matthew Pera / mpera@theunion.com |

Demonstrators stand outside of NID's headquarters in May before a board meeting, showing their opposition to the proposed Centennial Reservoir project...

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PROTESTS FILED

The state water resources control board received and accepted protests against NID's application from the following groups:

- County of Placer
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- Placer County Water Agency
- South Sutter Water District

Nevada Irrigation District is negotiating with groups that have filed protests against its application for water rights on the Bear River.

The district has applied to divert up to 221,400 acre feet of water annually on the Bear River to feed the proposed Centennial Reservoir. In order to begin diversion, the district's application for water rights must be accepted, said Timothy Moran, a public information officer for the State Water Resources Control Board.

California's Department of Finance filed an application for water rights on the Bear River in 1927 as a placeholder for future needs, and NID is attempting to take over a portion of that application for its proposed reservoir project, Moran said.

Eventually, the Control Board will hold a hearing to decide whether it will grant NID's petition, but the district must first complete other steps in the application process, including an environmental impact report, according to Moran.

A hearing for NID's application is not yet scheduled.

According to NID General Manager Remleh Scherzinger, the district plans to release an environmental impact report for the project late next year.

Foothills Water Network

David and Cheryl Sprunck

Contra Costa Water District

Nevada City Rancheria Tribal Council

Richard and Stephanie Curin

Dianna and Cam Suarez

Cecelia Hulett, Joan Hoss, Kirsten Mitchell c/o Marsha A. Burch

Pacific Gas & Electric

American River Watershed Institute

The district's application was filed in 2014 and the Control Board accepted protests until October 2016. Prior to the deadline, the Control Board received and accepted 14 protests.

If NID is unable to resolve all 14 protests before its hearing, the Control Board can deny the district's water rights application, add conditions to NID's permit to address specific protest concerns, or grant the permit with no additional conditions.

When asked whether any protests had been resolved during the negotiation process, Scherzinger said Monday the district is "still negotiating."

Typically, when the Control Board conducts hearings on applications with unresolved protests, it adds conditions to address "valid, substantiated concerns that the board is convinced by," Moran said.

To contact Staff Writer Matthew Pera, email mpera@theunion.com or call 530-477-4231.

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