

Matthew Pera
Staff Writer

Back to: [LOCAL NEWS](#)
August 10, 2017
[Follow Local News](#)

[Submit Your News](#)

Nevada Irrigation District applies for Centennial Dam funding

Article

Comments (0)

[Share](#) 26

[Tweet](#)

[Pin it](#)

[Share](#)

2

[A](#) [A](#) [+](#)



Matthew Pera / mpera@theunion.com |

Demonstrators stood outside of NID's headquarters in May before a board meeting, showing their opposition to the Centennial Reservoir, which the district proposes building along the Bear River in Colfax.

The Nevada Irrigation District's Board of Directors voted Wednesday to apply for state funding for the proposed Centennial Reservoir.

Despite numerous complaints from the public, the board adopted a [resolution](#) approving that an application be made to the California Water Commission to obtain [Water Storage Investment Program](#) funding for the reservoir.

The resolution was initially placed on the board's consent agenda, which typically contains a list of routine items that can be simultaneously approved with one motion, but was later moved to the agenda's list of general orders.

Wednesday's regular 9 a.m. board meeting was canceled, and a special meeting was held instead at 1 p.m. Board Secretary Kris Stepanian [told The Union](#) the regular meeting was canceled so that board members could attend the opening ceremony for the Nevada County Fair Wednesday morning.

Some community members said they were concerned about a lack of transparency from NID because the controversial vote took place during a special meeting, and the resolution itself, posted on the district's website, gave very little information about what the application would entail.

The Water Storage Investment Program funding application is due Monday, and some community members said the last-minute resolution to approve NID's application was another roadblock toward transparency from the district. [The application period opened March 14.](#)

"This is another unfortunate example of NID taking actions important to the community without adequate public notice and participation," the South Yuba River Citizens League said Tuesday in a news release. "The deadline for this application was known six months ago. Given this project is controversial, financially risky, and will provide an uncertain benefit, the NID Board and staff should be operating with full transparency and inviting public participation."

According to the California Water Commission's website, California's Proposition 1, "the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014," dedicated 2.7 billion dollars for investments in water storage projects through the Water Storage Investment Program. The "public benefits" of water storage projects are funded by that money, the website states, and the commission was designated as the agency responsible for allocating those funds.

"Eligible projects must also provide measurable benefits to the Delta ecosystem or its tributaries," the website states.

NID customers asked whether the district was planning to sell some of the water that could be stored in the proposed Centennial Reservoir to areas outside of the district, and whether applying for the Water Storage Investment Program funding would require the district to give water to other parts of the state.

"The application gives up no water at this time," said NID General Manager Remleh Scherzinger.

Board President Nick Wilcox clarified that the resolution was just to approve an application, and wasn't a binding agreement of any kind.

"Whether or not we were to be granted funds, then we would have the decision as to whether or not to accept such funds," Wilcox said. "And that's a decision that is down the road some ways. So this is kind of an administrative action at this time."

Scherzinger said the district was "making no commitments" by submitting an application.

Grass Valley resident Rici Heck, who filed paperwork in July to run for the District 1 seat of NID's board, asked whether the board could add a condition to its resolution stating that the district would not commit any of its water to other parts of the state through the application.

The board approved Miller's motion, and later voted unanimously to approve the resolution.

"My red flag went up when I saw this item on the agenda, because there was no mention of Centennial," said board member Nancy Weber after the vote. "I thought 'Oh God, here we go again being deceptive.' It leaves a bad taste in my mouth, and leaves me in a very bad position as a board member."

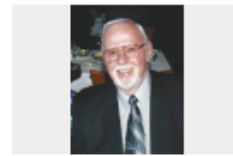
"Please don't put me in this uncomfortable position again," Weber said. "Share this information with me and share it with the community."

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

RECOMMENDED STORIES FOR YOU



[E. Coli Infections at 14, possibly linked to Lake Wildwood Beach – extended beach closures | TheUnion.com](#)



[Obituary of Harold 'Bud' Shuster | TheUnion.com](#)



[PREP FOOTBALL: Humphers returns to coaching, joins River Valley staff | TheUnion.com](#)



[Obituary of Hank \(Harold\) Harr | TheUnion.com](#)