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Hundreds Rally at LaMalfa & McClintock Event in Auburn *Community Leaders Call for Congressional Town Hall Meetings on Climate Change, Water and Health Care*

AUBURN, Calif. – Five hundred people Friday morning rallied outside Auburn’s The Ridge Golf Course, demanding that U.S. Representatives Doug LaMalfa (Dist. 1) and Tom McClintock (Dist. 4) address concerns on climate change, health care, and the environment in a public forum. The peaceful demonstrators, organized by Indivisible Women of Nevada County and other groups, congregated along the public road into the golf course, where the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) held an all-day symposium, “The New Trump Administration – A View from the Top,” where Congressmen Doug LaMalfa and Tom McClintock were scheduled to speak about “their views on the new Trump Administration on regional water interests.”

South Yuba River Citizen League (SYRCL) volunteers joined the demonstrators to educate and engage others in the “Dam Watchdog” campaign to challenge the Nevada Irrigation District’s plans to build Centennial Dam on the Bear River. And in an unexpected opportunity created by one of the rally’s organizers, Caleb Dardick, SYRCL’s Executive Director, joined a group of community members who met with LaMalfa in the afternoon.

“Our volunteers — or Dam Watchdogs — were out here at the MCWRA symposium because the proposal to build Centennial Dam has state-wide implications about how we sustainably manage water and our watersheds in the face of climate change. It cuts to the heart of why our congressional representatives must be accountable to their constituents on these critical issues,” said Dardick.

LaMalfa accepted an invitation from Barbara Jones (of Indivisible Women of Nevada County) to meet with a delegation of five community representatives at noon. The delegation included Barbara Jones and Barbara DeHart of Indivisible Women of Nevada County; Caleb Dardick of SYRCL, Reinette Senum, Nevada City Councilmember, and Shelly Covert, Nevada City Rancheria Tribal Council Secretary.

“Thanks to Barbara Jones’ initiative and diplomacy, we had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with Rep. LaMalfa. I spoke to him about the need to hold a town hall meeting on water and climate change – one that the public may freely attend. We discussed the situation at

Oroville Dam, the safety risks brought forth in 2005 by SYRCL, Friends of the River and the Sierra Club, and the need to fix aging infrastructure,” said Dardick

Dardick also inquired about any legislation LaMalfa may be sponsoring that would transfer BLM land to the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) for the Centennial Dam project. LaMalfa confirmed that a previous bill of this nature had died and has not been asked again by NID to carry new legislation.

“I would like to thank Rep. LaMalfa for listening to the delegation’s range of issues: climate change, health care, homelessness, federal recognition of the Nisenan, and water security,” said Dardick.

LaMalfa indicated to the delegation he would hold a town hall meeting in April.

“This is welcome news from Rep. LaMalfa, especially after the Oroville Dam Spillway crisis. We are facing the harsh realities of global warming, and it’s important that he hear our concerns and bring federal resources to fund collaborative solutions.”

Background

MCWRA promoted the February 24th all-day symposium as an opportunity for members and non-members to hear from state and federal representatives. On Tuesday, February 14, more than a dozen local leaders — including Dardick, Covert and Senum — who had purchased \$40 tickets online, had their money refunded and were told in an email from MCWRA Executive Director John Kingsbury that due to member interest in the February 24th event, “space capacity prevents us from being able to accommodate your registration. The registration fee will be refunded.”

The rally outside the MCWRA event attracted citizens mobilized by various groups, such as: SYRCL’s Dam Watchdog team, Indivisible Women of Nevada County, Mobilize NC, Yuba Indivisible, Indivisible Auburn, Indivisible Gold Country, Foothills Water Network, among others. They cooperated with local law enforcement and remained on public property during the demonstration.

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL, pronounced “circle”) is the leading voice for the protection and restoration of the Yuba River watershed. Founded in 1983 through a rural, grassroots campaign to defend the South Yuba River from proposed hydropower dams, SYRCL has developed into a vibrant community organization with over 3,500 members and volunteers based in Nevada City, CA.

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