



SOUTH YUBA RIVER CITIZENS LEAGUE

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Centennial Dam Receives Zero on Public Benefit Score

Today the California Water Commission (CWC) released the Public Benefit Ratio (PBR) for the Centennial Dam Project on the Bear River. According to state technical reviewers of the application submitted by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID), Centennial Dam has a public benefit ratio of zero.

A PBR score of zero means that for every dollar of potential Proposition 1 funds spent on Centennial, the Centennial project would provide \$0.00 of public ecosystem and recreational benefits.

“Zero cents on the dollar is a horrible rate of return for California taxpayers. Once again, the proposed Centennial Dam project proves itself to be a financial boondoggle for ratepayers and taxpayers,” said Melinda Booth, Executive Director of the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL).

The PBR NID originally submitted in their application was 4.19. NID now has until February 23 to submit an appeal.

The Foothills Water Network (the Network) also has been tracking the Proposition 1 funding process carefully. Traci Sheehan, Coordinator for the Network said, “We appreciate the diligence of the independent reviewers. They came to the same conclusion as our Dam Watchdogs: that the Centennial Dam application overinflated the public benefit ratio and a did not substantiate its claims.”

“We’re now asking NID to pull the CWC application and demonstrate fiscal responsibility by not expending further resources in pursuit of the Proposition 1 funding,” said Sheehan.

SYRCL and the Network question the eligibility of NID’s application for Proposition 1 funding on the basis that Centennial would not create a net public benefit because of the environmental, cultural and economic damage the dam would bring to the Bear River.

“Centennial contradicts the goals of the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). Affordable recreation and thriving ecosystems already exist. Trading thousands of acres of oak woodland and natural wetlands for poor quality habitat with a steep price tag is not a good deal for Californians,” said Booth, SYRCL’s Executive Director.

In 2014 Californians passed a bond to invest in three broad objectives: more reliable water supplies, restoration of important species and habitat, and more resilient and sustainably managed water infrastructure. NID is vying for a portion of the \$2.7 billion of Proposition 1 funding available.

Of particular concern to the Network and SYRCL is NID's application statement that, "The proposed project *does not provide* measurable improvement to the Delta Ecosystem or tributary to the Delta."

Yet, legislation is clear. In order to qualify for these bond dollars, NID is required to demonstrate a benefit to the Delta (California Water Code Chapter 8, Section 79752).

The California Water Commission review timeline has been modified and pushed out through July to accommodate appeals. Commissioners will post their response to NID's appeal on April 20. More information regarding the Water Storage Investment Program may be found online at: <https://cwc.ca.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>.

South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)

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.

SYRCL and allies recently collected and submitted more than 3,000 letters to the California Water Commission urging the denial of NID's request for \$11.95 million in Proposition 1 funding under the WSIP.

Foothills Water Network (the Network)

The Network is an alliance of conservation, angling and recreation groups, whose mission is to protect and enhance aquatic ecosystem health and recreation opportunities in the Yuba, Bear and American rivers.

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