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New NID Board Fires ‘Plan for Water’ Consultants

Nevada City, CA – At the Nevada Irrigation District’s (NID) Board Meeting January 23, 2019, the newly seated Board Directors voted to “terminate without prejudice” *Plan for Water* facilitation consultants, The Kolbe Company (Kolbe), and chose a new public process, the [American Water Works Association M50 \(M50\)](#), that will be guided by public stakeholders.

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) and the Foothills Water Network (the Network) praised the decision. SYRCL Executive Director Melinda Booth said, “This is a step in the right direction for NID to re-gain public trust, especially after the poorly organized meetings facilitated by Kolbe in December. It felt like we were just going through the motions and weren’t offered the chance to provide substantive input on our community’s water future. NID’s next step should be to stop spending money on Centennial while they are updating the Raw Water Master Plan.”

Before the Board Meeting, SYRCL and the Network re-submitted a formal 11-page letter to NID expressing “significant disappointment” with NID’s implementation of the update to the Raw Water Master Plan (RWMP, also known as *Plan for Water*) so far and requested NID to implement the Network’s recommendations in the original May 2018 [letter](#). The letter recommended NID involve the public early in the process, stop spending money on Centennial and form a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in addition to including public stakeholders.

Upon re-submittal of the letter, SYRCL and the Network objected again to NID’s continued spending on Centennial Dam during the RWMP process. Moreover, the organizations felt Kolbe’s prescriptive *Plan for Water* process was shaping up to be a “trojan horse” for Centennial Dam because there was no stakeholder input on formulating the process, no opportunity to contribute or review the hydrological data, and no public input incorporated into the final RWMP product. The organizations also took issue with the amount of money NID has already spent on Kolbe in the first two months, an estimated \$140,000 out of the \$811,000 two-year contract.

To address those concerns and comments from the public, the NID Board voted 4-1 to fire Kolbe and move forward with a new process: M50. As part of the M50 process, a public stakeholder group will be chosen at the next NID Water and Hydroelectric Committee meeting February 12, 2019. NID will also select a new professional facilitator to direct the M50 process in the coming months.

About SYRCL

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) 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 more than 3,500 members and volunteers. See: www.yubariver.org.

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