



FOOTHILLS WATER NETWORK

For Immediate Release: September 6, 2019

Contacts:

Melinda Booth, Executive Director
South Yuba River Citizens League
(530) 265-5961 x202; melinda@yubariver.org

Traci Sheehan, Coordinator
Foothills Water Network
(530) 919-3219; traci@foothillswaternetwork.org

NID to Stop Purchasing Properties for Centennial Dam Continues to Spend Money on Project

Nevada City, CA – The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) announced at their August 28th board meeting that they will temporarily stop purchasing property for the foreseeable future – including parcels within the proposed Centennial Dam project area.

NID's proposal to build a new 110,000 acre-foot reservoir with a 275 foot-tall dam on the Bear River would inundate six miles of the Bear River, completely flooding the Bear River Campground, more than 25 homes, 120 parcels, and Dog Bar Bridge, the only crossing of the Bear River between Highway 49 and Highway 174.

Even though the Board has yet to study or even approve the project, over the last five years NID has spent more than \$7 million on property acquisitions connected with the Centennial project.

According to YubaNet, an NID staff report outlines a new policy to stop property acquisitions for unapproved potential projects like Centennial. NID points to recent financial uncertainties including the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) bankruptcy proceedings as necessitating the new policy. PG&E currently purchases all the electricity that NID generates, estimated at over \$20 million in revenue for 2019. Over half of the revenue is used to subsidize water rates.

"The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) applauds NID for making the fiscally responsible decision to temporarily suspend property purchases for the proposed Centennial Dam. SYRCL and our allies have consistently asked NID to cease spending on Centennial where legally possible for more than a year, and property acquisition was the majority of that spending," says Melinda Booth, Executive Director of SYRCL.

While NID has decided to pause spending on property purchases, the District still has \$1.75 million to spend on Centennial in 2019 and is proposing to spend \$500,000 on Centennial every year until 2024.

"SYRCL asks NID to continue prioritizing fiscal responsibility for our community and stop spending on Centennial where legally possible. Precious funds designated to Centennial can be used for immediately needed infrastructure projects or allocated back to NID's depleted reserves," says Booth.

Based in Nevada City, CA, 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 more than 3,500 members and volunteers.

The Foothills Water Network represents a broad group of non-governmental organizations and water resource stakeholders in the Yuba River, Bear River, and American River watersheds. The overall goal of the Foothills Water Network is to provide a forum that increases the effectiveness of non-profit conservation organizations to achieve river and watershed restoration and protection benefits for the Yuba, Bear, and American rivers.