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NEWSLINES

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conducted for at least 16 basin-wide water conveyance alternatives. The holdup is that there are hundreds of pages to review and prepare, as well as security concerns to take into account.

Jim Brobeck, water policy analyst for AquAlliance, told the CN&R that the Chico-based water advocacy group has requested these documents from the utility as it has conducted these studies over the past 10 years and has been "rebuffed" every time.

Brobeck also agreed with Lucero that the scope of work isn't comprehensive. It's important for Cal Water customers to consider whether they are willing to pay to keep PID afloat. While the study mentions examining volatile organic compounds of the water that could be transported, it doesn't mention herbicides or other chemicals that could compromise the water quality, he added. A comprehensive study would examine many alternatives to help the county conform to SGMA.

He told the CN&R he is "concerned that this disaster is being used" to push this project forward without proper examination of the impacts to the groundwater-dependent ecosystem and the ratepayers.

Lucero shared similar concerns. The county should be wary of blindly trusting an investor-owned utility, especially after the Camp Fire, she said.

Barber told the panel that Cal Water wants to participate in this study to improve the health of the aquifer and benefit its customers—the cost and water quality are important. "We are here at the table to be considered as maybe a buyer of water if this project makes sense," he said.

Eight of the 10 speakers who approached the panel supported the study. Several were Camp Fire survivors who expressed worries about the rebuild if PID doesn't forge ahead with this project. "Paradise has to have water," Paradise Councilman Steve Crowder said. "Help us survive, help us rebuild."

It's unclear if the county will move forward. Barber didn't leave the supervisors with much assurances on the deadline: "Whether you get them all in two weeks, I certainly can't commit to that."

—ASHIAH SCHARAGA
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