

# Northern Tulare County Regionalization *Community Meeting*



SAFER Program – February 26, 2025

# Welcome and Local District Boards Roll Call

- Cutler Public Utility District
- Sultana Community Services District
- Orosi Public Utility District
- Yettem-Seville Community Services District



# Purpose and Framing

*Laurel Firestone,  
State Water Board Member*



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# Purpose and Framing

- Opportunity to develop a sustainable and long-term solution
- What is your vision of the region?
- To get to your vision, what questions do you want answered first?
- What would you want to be included in the feasibility study?



# Welcome & Introductions

*Johannus Reijnders,  
State Water Board*



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# Meeting Agenda

- **Technical Discussion**
- **Feasibility Study Discussion**
- **Governance Discussion**
- **Next Steps**

## Welcome & Introductions

# Meeting Agreements

- Please wait to give your questions and comments until we reach the discussion portion for each section
- Everyone will have the chance to speak during these discussion portions
- You can comment several ways: speak during the discussion, fill out a comment sheet for us to read out loud, or leave your feedback after
- There will also be an opportunity to provide feedback after the meeting in case you want time to reflect

# Welcome & Introductions

## Ways To Participate

- **Speak your comment:**
  - Raise your hand and we will come by with a microphone
- **Fill out a comment sheet:**
  - Raise your hand and one of us will read the comment for you
  - Or leave your comment sheet behind for us to collect
- **Send in comments after this meeting for the next 14 days**
  - Follow this link to submit a question: [www.bit.ly/ntcwater](http://www.bit.ly/ntcwater)



# Welcome & Introductions

## **State Water Board:**

- Laurel Firestone
- Chad Fischer
- Bryan Potter
- Caitlin Juarez
- Bridget Chase
- Adriana Renteria
- Rachel Wittenberg
- Johannus Reijnders

## **Provost & Pritchard:**

- Maija Madec
- John Plath
- Ryan Jensen

## **UC Berkeley, UCANR:**

- Kristin Dobbin

# Technical Discussion

*Maija Madec,  
Provost and Pritchard*



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## Technical Discussion

# Northern Tulare County Regionalization

- Historic groundwater quality issues:
  - Nitrate, TCP, DBCP
- Efficient utilization of existing groundwater resources
  - Ongoing independent consolidations in the region moving toward resource-sharing
- Community desires to consider Surface Water
  - 2007 and 2015 studies by Keller Wegley



## Technical Discussion

# Surface Water Considerations

- Expense of constructing & operating a surface water treatment plant (SWTP)
- Water Rights
- Purchase of Supply
- Reliability of Supply
- Conveyance costs
- Pumping & use of Friant Kern Canal (FKC)
- Distribution Water Quality
- Disinfection Strategy
- Operator Requirements & Expertise
- Impacts of drought
- Planned FKC maintenance
- Potential for blending with Groundwater

# Community Discussion

*What is your vision of the region?*

*What technical questions do you need answered to get to your vision?*

# Feasibility Study Discussion

*John Plath,  
Provost and Pritchard*



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# Feasibility Study Discussion

## Regional Supply

- Groundwater and Surface Water Sources
  - What is the current drinking water usage and supply across the region?
  - What is the capacity of the existing wells?
  - What would the capacity of a SWTP (Surface Water Treatment Plant) need to be?
- Physically interconnecting the communities required to deliver either surface water or groundwater regionally

## Feasibility Study Discussion

# Affordability Considerations

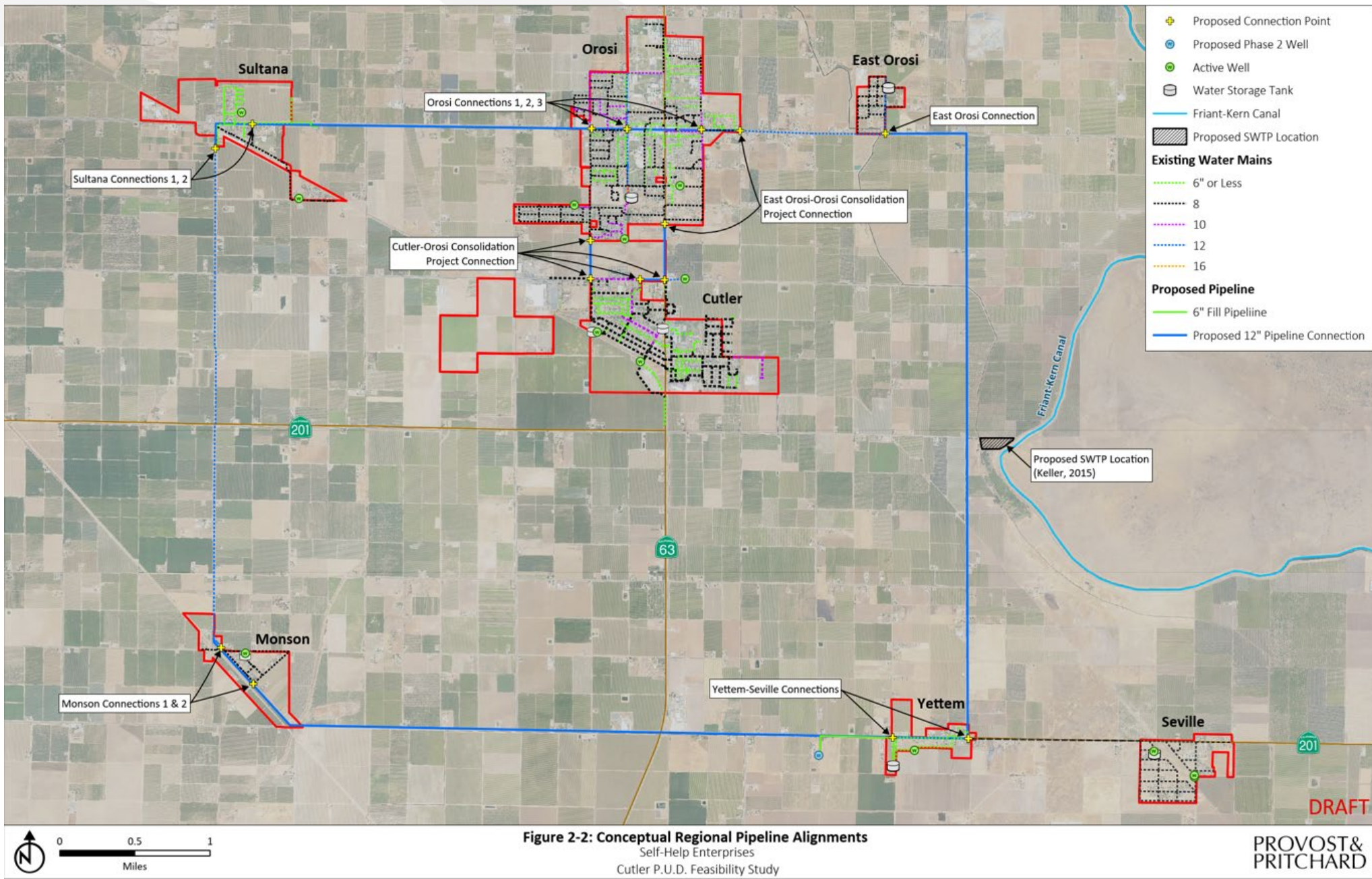
- Real costs to each community of running individual water systems?
- Potential cost reduction by operating as a single system?
- How much would Surface Water add to those costs?

### Additional costs:

- Water delivery, treatment and operational costs of SWTP

### Potential Savings:

- Fewer wells to operate and maintain
- Administrative efficiencies





# Community Discussion

*When the regional water solutions'  
feasibility study is completed:  
what questions do you  
want it to answer?*

# Governance Discussion

*Kristin Dobbin,  
UC Berkeley/UCANR*



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## Governance Discussion

# Regionalization can take MANY forms.

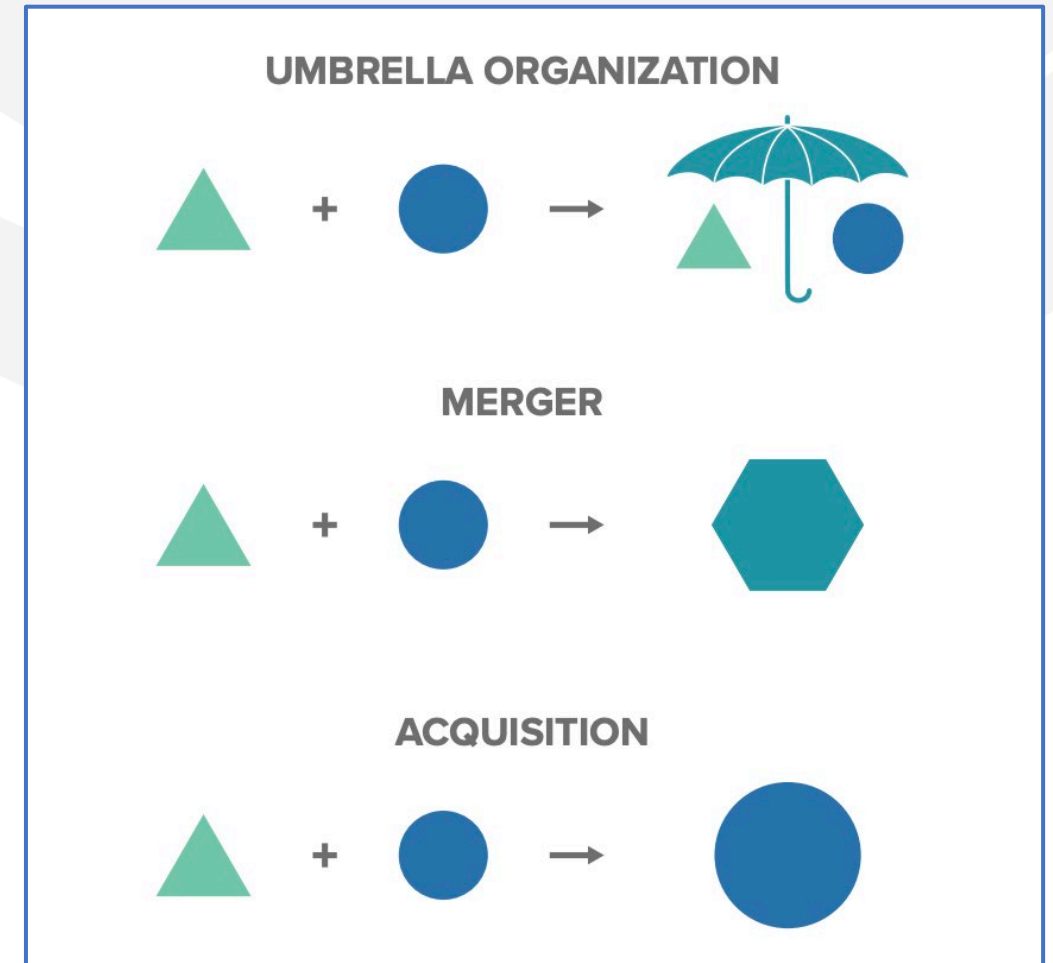
Benefits, challenges and outcomes are informed by:

1. How the regionalization is structured
2. How the resulting entity is governed



# Governance Discussion

## 3 options for structuring regionalization



# Governance Discussion

## 2 general options for governance

### Special districts:

- Includes: Community Services District; Public Utilities District; County Water District
- Example: Cobb Area County Water District

### Joint Powers Authority:

- Also called: Joint Powers Agreements
- Example: Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency

# Governance Discussion

## Evaluation criteria

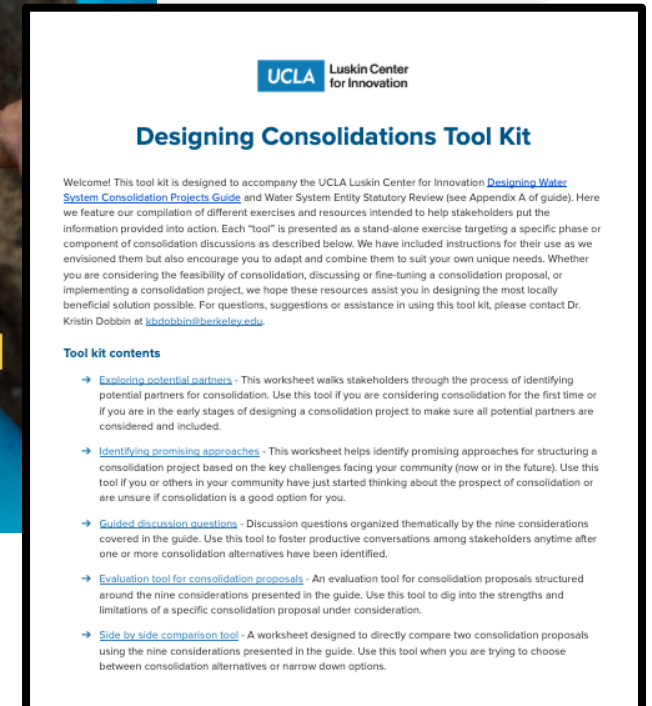
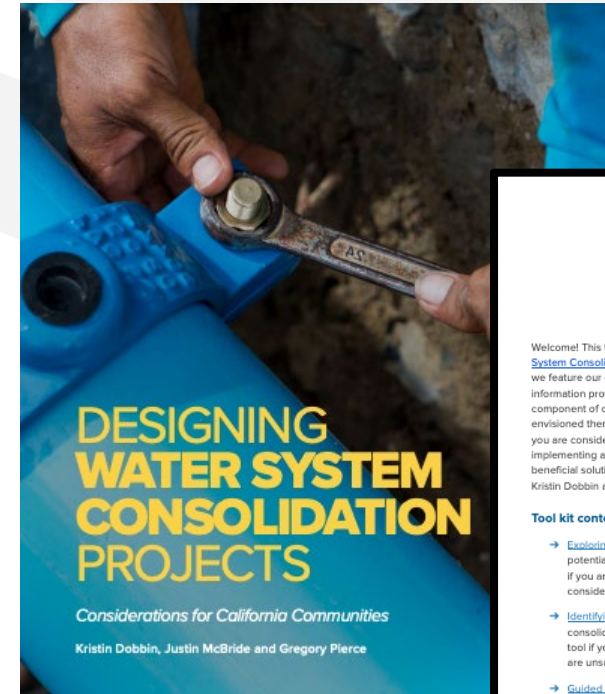
1. Access to safe, reliable drinking water
2. Scope of powers & authorities
3. Implications for other services & powers
4. Revenue & cost features
5. Technical, Managerial & Financial (TMF) capacity
6. Representation & transparency
7. Flexibility & administrative transaction costs
8. Sustainability & climate resilience
9. Affordability



# Governance Discussion

## Deciding on a governance option

- Define challenges, goals and priorities. What is the goal? What benefits are most important to achieve?
- Compare governance options using evaluation criteria



## Governance Discussion

**All options/combinations have strengths and weaknesses.**

**Most designs involve tradeoffs.**

# Community Discussion

*What questions do you need answered about governance?*



# Next Steps

*Ryan Jensen  
Provost and Pritchard*



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## Next Steps

# Path to Regionalization

- Community engagement
- Draft Feasibility study (technical & governance solutions)
- Final Feasibility study
- Joint workshop meetings
  - Collective visioning
- Decision point
  - **Either:**
    - Selection of preferred alternative
    - Plan for engineering report
  - **Or:**
    - No regionalization plan moves forward

## Next Steps

# Community Engagement

- Provost and Pritchard will complete the Draft Feasibility Report at end of February 2025
- Draft Feasibility Report will be reviewed by existing boards and presented to the Community
- Community-driven selection of a preferred project
- Prior efforts come down to costs and governance
- Expect that any solution begins with thinking regionally



## Next Steps

# Community Feedback

### Focus of 2015 study:

- Individual systems with water supply agreements from the proposed surface water treatment plant
- Unanswered questions on:
  - Overall Costs and Financing Structure
  - Allocation of Recurring Costs

### Feedback from 2015:

- Reliability of Surface Water Supply and Friant Kern Canal outage management
- High price for Surface Water
  - (Then \$200/acre foot)
- Governance remains unresolved with formation of 2 separate JPAs

# Q & A



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## Q & A

# How to Submit Written Questions

- Deadline: Thursday, March 13, 2025
- Drop off a **comment card** at your local water district's office.
  - Take a comment card home with you today.
  - Fill one out at your local water district's office.
- Email: [SAFER@Waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:SAFER@Waterboards.ca.gov)
- Online Form: [www.bit.ly/ntcwater](http://www.bit.ly/ntcwater)



## Closing & Local Water Board Adjourn

- Cutler Public Utility District
- Sultana Community Services District
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