

# 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

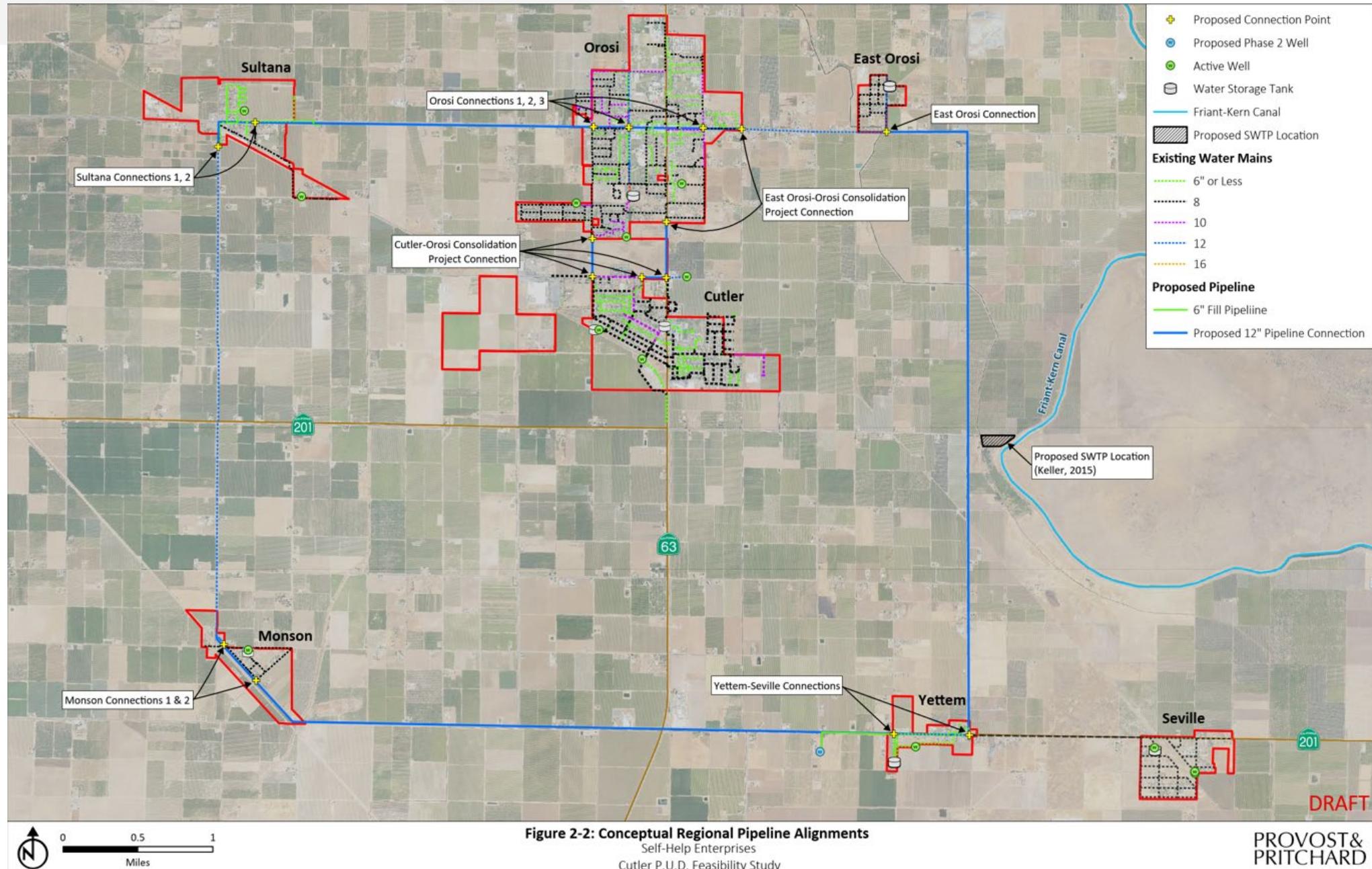
- Real costs to each community of running individual water systems?
- Potential cost reduction by operating as a single system?
- How much would Surface Water add to those costs?

### 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

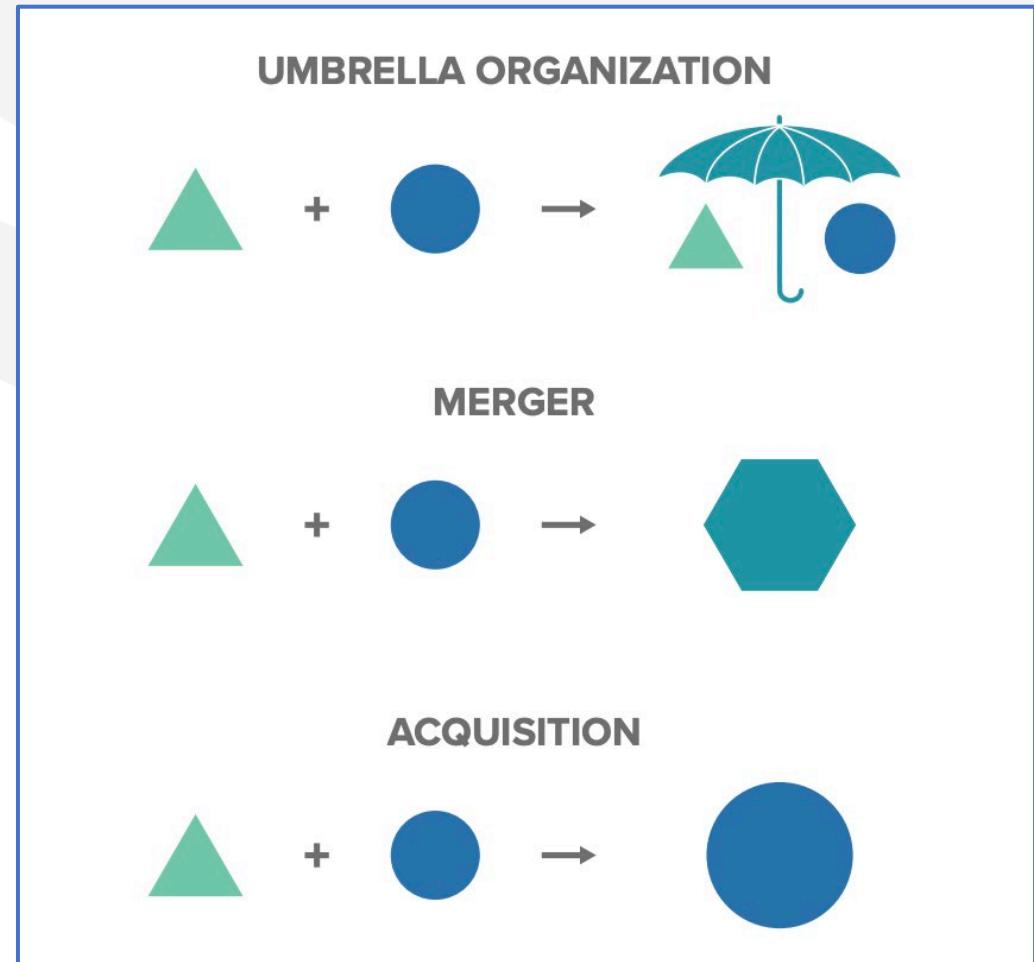
**Regionalization  
can take MANY forms.**

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

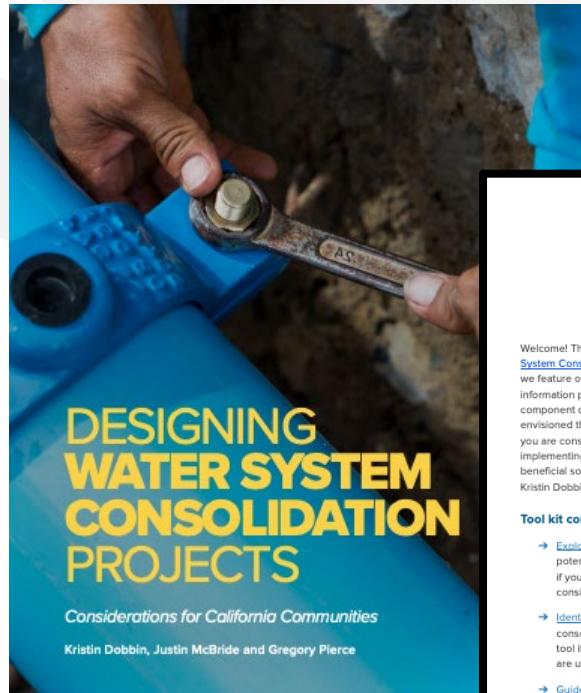
## Evaluation criteria

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



**UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation**

**Designing Consolidations Tool Kit**

Welcome! This tool kit is designed to accompany the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation [Designing Water System Consolidation Projects Guide](#) and Water System Entity Statutory Review (see Appendix A of guide). Here we feature our compilation of different exercises and resources intended to help stakeholders put the information provided into action. Each "tool" is presented as a stand-alone exercise targeting a specific phase or component of consolidation discussions as described below. We have included instructions for their use as we envisioned them but also encourage you to adapt and combine them to suit your own unique needs. Whether you are considering the feasibility of consolidation, discussing or fine-tuning a consolidation proposal, or implementing a consolidation project, we hope these resources assist you in designing the most locally beneficial solution possible. For questions, suggestions or assistance in using this tool kit, please contact Dr. Kristin Dobbin at [ktdobbin@berkeley.edu](mailto:ktdobbin@berkeley.edu).

**Tool kit contents**

- [Exploring potential partners](#) - This worksheet walks stakeholders through the process of identifying potential partners for consolidation. Use this tool if you are considering consolidation for the first time or if you are in the early stages of designing a consolidation project to make sure all potential partners are considered and included.
- [Identifying promising approaches](#) - This worksheet helps identify promising approaches for structuring a consolidation project based on the key challenges facing your community (now or in the future). Use this tool if you or others in your community have just started thinking about the prospect of consolidation or are unsure if consolidation is a good option for you.
- [Guided discussion questions](#) - Discussion questions organized thematically by the nine considerations covered in the guide. Use this tool to foster productive conversations among stakeholders anytime after one or more consolidation alternatives have been identified.
- [Evaluation tool for consolidation proposals](#) - An evaluation tool for consolidation proposals structured around the nine considerations presented in the guide. Use this tool to dig into the strengths and limitations of a specific consolidation proposal under consideration.
- [Side by side comparison tool](#) - A worksheet designed to directly compare two consolidation proposals using the nine considerations presented in the guide. Use this tool when you are trying to choose between consolidation alternatives or narrow down options.

## 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
- Orosi Public Utility District
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