

Northern Tulare County Regionalization *Community Meeting*



SAFER Program – May 7, 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
- East Orosi Community Services District

Welcome & Introductions

*Johannus Reijnders,
State Water Board*



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Welcome & Introductions

State Water Board:

- Laurel Firestone
- Bryan Potter
- Bridget Chase
- Adriana Renteria
- Rachel Wittenberg
- Johannus Reijnders
- Aaron Dickinson
- Icelyn Yepez

Provost & Pritchard:

- Maija Madec
- John Plath

UC Berkeley, UCANR:

- Kristin Dobbin

Meeting Agenda

- Recap project goals and comments received
- Projects around the region
- Review draft feasibility study results and what makes a strong funding application
- Community visioning
- Next steps

Welcome & Introductions

What We Welcome

- We welcome waiting to give your questions and comments until we reach the discussion portion for each section
- We welcome your comments
- We welcome speaking one at a time and using the microphone
- 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

Recap: Why We're Here & What We Heard

Adriana Renteria



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Project Purpose: Building a Stronger Northern Tulare County Regional Water Future

Our Shared Goal: Ensure every community in the region has long-term, sustainable, and affordable access to safe drinking water.

How the State Water Board can support:

- Create space for open dialogue to shape a shared regional vision
- Fund studies to explore drinking water solutions that benefit the whole region
- Share examples of regional governance partnerships that have worked elsewhere
- If there is broad interest, support the region in preparing a strong funding application
- Provide technical assistance help to take the next steps toward a regional drinking water solution

What We Heard from the Last Meeting

- Strong commitment to improving drinking water access across the region and interest in collaboration between all local water districts
- Concerns that a regional project could delay or affect local projects already underway
- Questions about how funding will be shared and sustained
- Desire for continued conversations about how decisions will be made (governance)
- Need for more clarity on the timeline and next steps

Responding to What We Heard

Questions: A regional project could delay or affect local projects already underway. Are local projects stopping?

Response:

- Local projects are moving forward and are key building blocks for regional progress
- Regional efforts happen in phases, and local progress lays the groundwork
- Local decisions made now matter— planning with the bigger picture in mind can unlock more funding, support, and long-term benefits

Responding to What We Heard

Questions: How much funding will we get? Who will pay? How much will my rates be?

Response:

- We're identifying possible solutions and understanding what they cost
- Once an alternative is chosen, the engineering report will identify operations and maintenance costs and preliminary rate study

Why Work Together?

- If more/most water districts participate = more access to funding
- Shared costs = lower costs for everyone
- Local projects can support regional progress
- Regional planning makes long-term solutions more affordable and sustainable

Hearing from Around the Region: Current Efforts and Local Perspectives

Johannus Reijnders



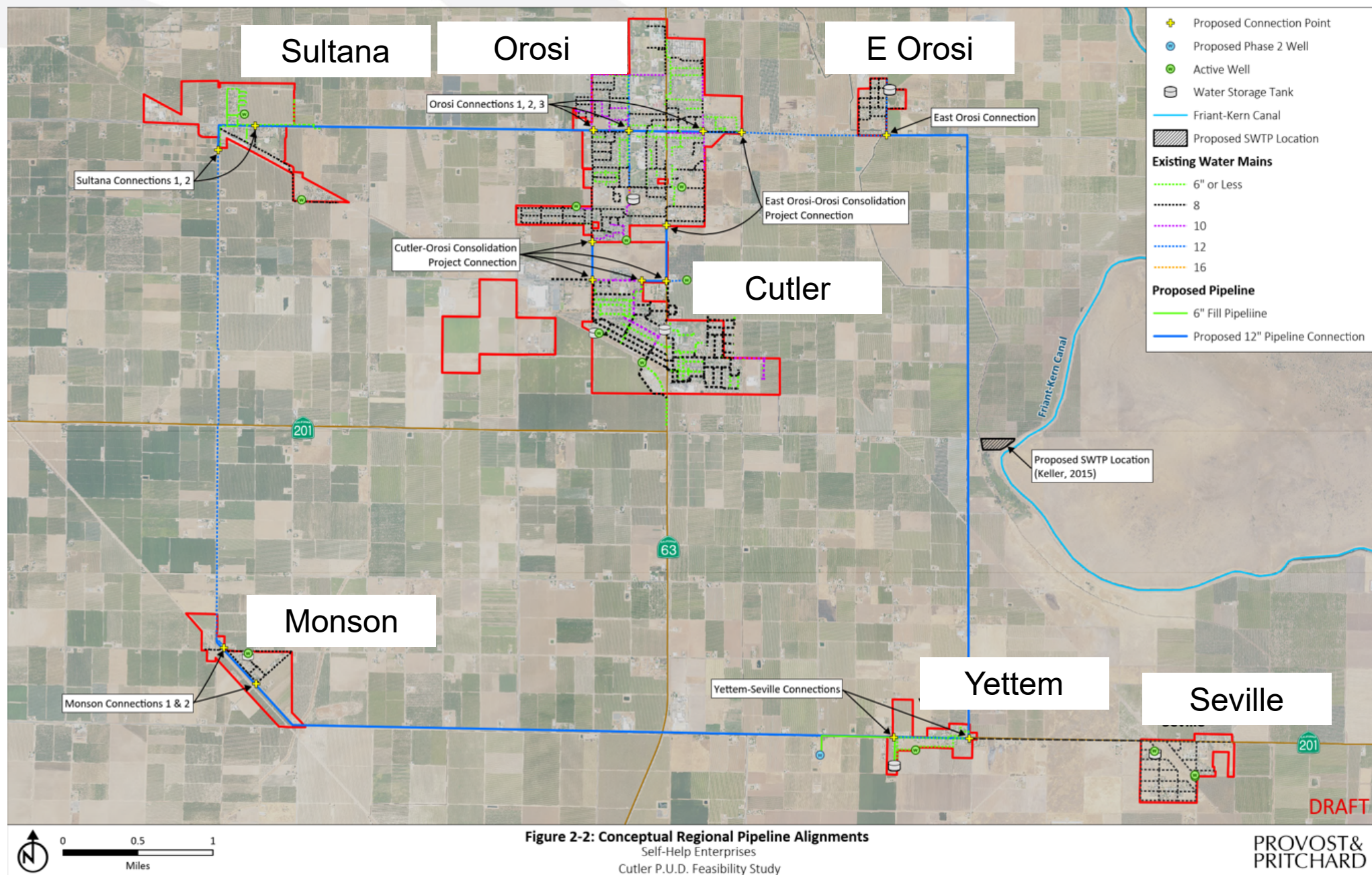
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Hearing From Around the Region

Purpose: To build shared understanding of current efforts and challenges across all 7 communities. To listen, learn, and begin identifying shared challenges and opportunities across the region.

Format:

- SAFER staff will present a brief technical overview
- Opportunity for group conversation at the end of this recap



Cutler Public Utilities District

Current Challenges

No water meters are installed

TMF capacity issues

Water Quality Contaminations:
Nitrate & 1, 2, 3 - TCP

Ongoing Projects

WELL C10

Requires a new well and a new storage/blending tank.

Consolidation w/ Orosi PUD

The voluntary negotiation deadline has been extended to **Sept. 1, 2025**.

Next Steps

WELL C10

Complete the 6th Funding Agreement Amendment

Complete Equipping of Well C10

Consolidation w/ Orosi PUD

Complete the Voluntary Consolidation Agreement

Finalize Feasibility Study and Select a Project Alternative

Cutler Public Utilities District

Project Costs and Project Timeline	
Well C10	Project Cost: \$2,931,300
	Construction to be completed by March 2026
Consolidation w/ Orosi PUD	Project Cost: TBD
	Project Timeline: TBD

East Orosi Community Services District

Next Steps	
Current Project Phase	Finalize Bid Documents
	Advertise Project
	Award Project
	Proceed with Construction
Project Cost and Project Timeline	
Project Cost: \$13,521,607	
Construction to be completed by October 2026	

Monson-Sultana

Current Challenges

Water Supply & Reliability

Ongoing Projects

Connection between Monson and Sultana Water Systems

Installation of:

(1) New Well

SCADA System

Radio Read Water Meters

Project Costs and Project Timeline

Project Cost: **\$8,590,482**

Construction to be completed by **July 2025**

Yettem-Seville Community Services District

Current Challenges	Ongoing Projects	
Water Quality Contaminations: Nitrate Water Supply & Reliability	PHASE 2	Connection between Yettem and Seville Water Systems
		Installation of Water Meters
		(1) New Well
		Transmission Main to Tank
Project Costs and Project Timeline		
PHASE 2	Project Cost: \$11,520,975	
	Test Well going out to bid by May 2025	
	Test Well construction by Summer 2025	
	Phase 2 construction to be completed by Summer 2027	

Yettem-Seville Community Services District

Ongoing Projects	
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Seville Emergency Well Project	(1) New Well
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Project Costs and Project Timeline	
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Seville Emergency Well Project	Project Cost: TBD
	Project Application has been submitted

Discussion: What Are We Hearing Across the Region?

- What else do you want to share about your community?
- What challenges came up in more than one community?
- Are there overlapping needs or concerns?
- Where do we see opportunities to work together? How might a regional approach help?
- If we don't act together, what could the future look like for the region?

Draft Regionalization Feasibility Study Results

Bryan Potter
Maija Madec, John Plath

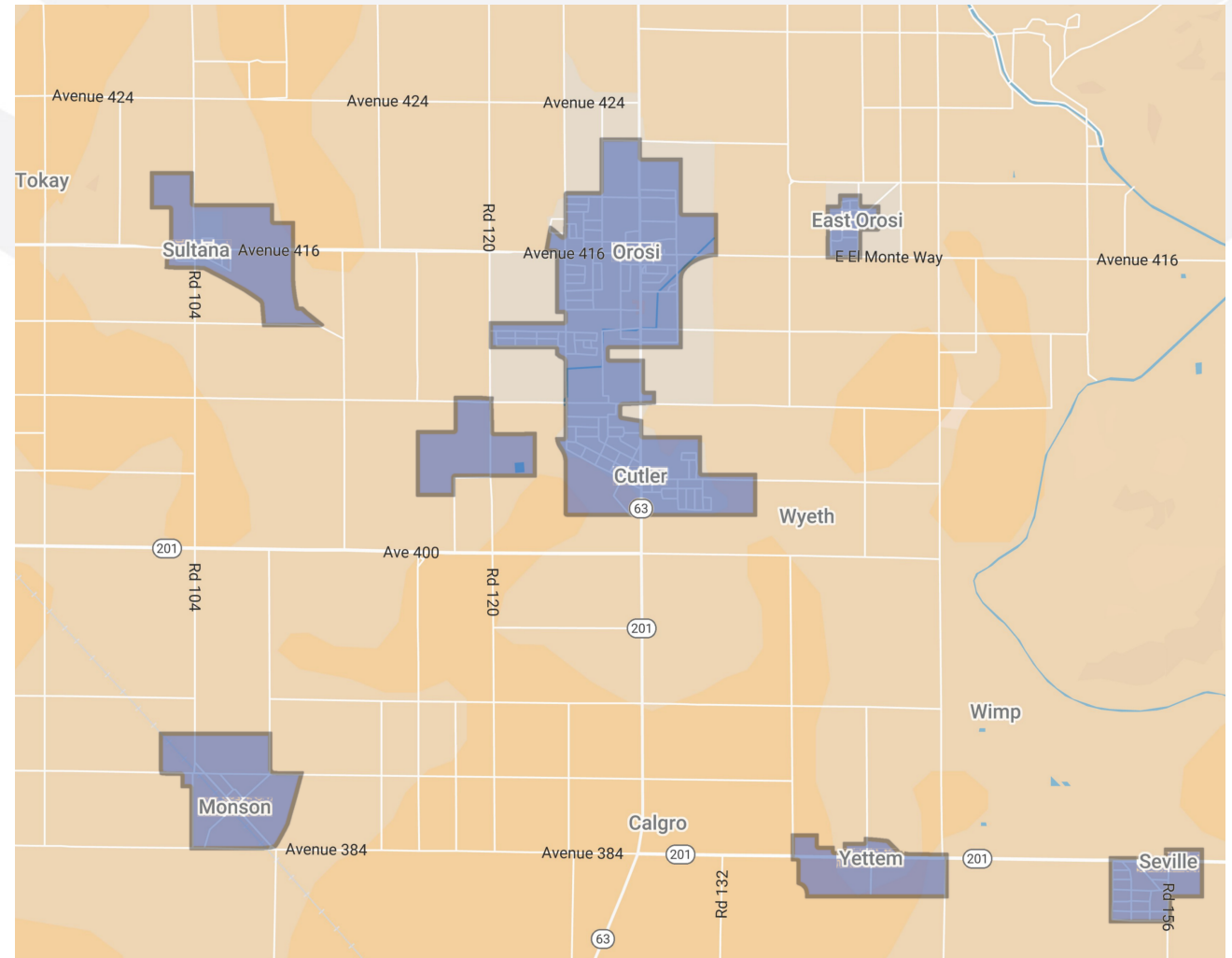


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Northern Tulare County Regionalization Study

Provost & Prichard have conducted a feasibility study to assess potential long term drinking water solutions for these seven (7) communities:

- Cutler PUD
- Orosi PUD
- East Orosi CSD
- Monson WS
- Seville WC
- Sultana CSD
- Yettem WS

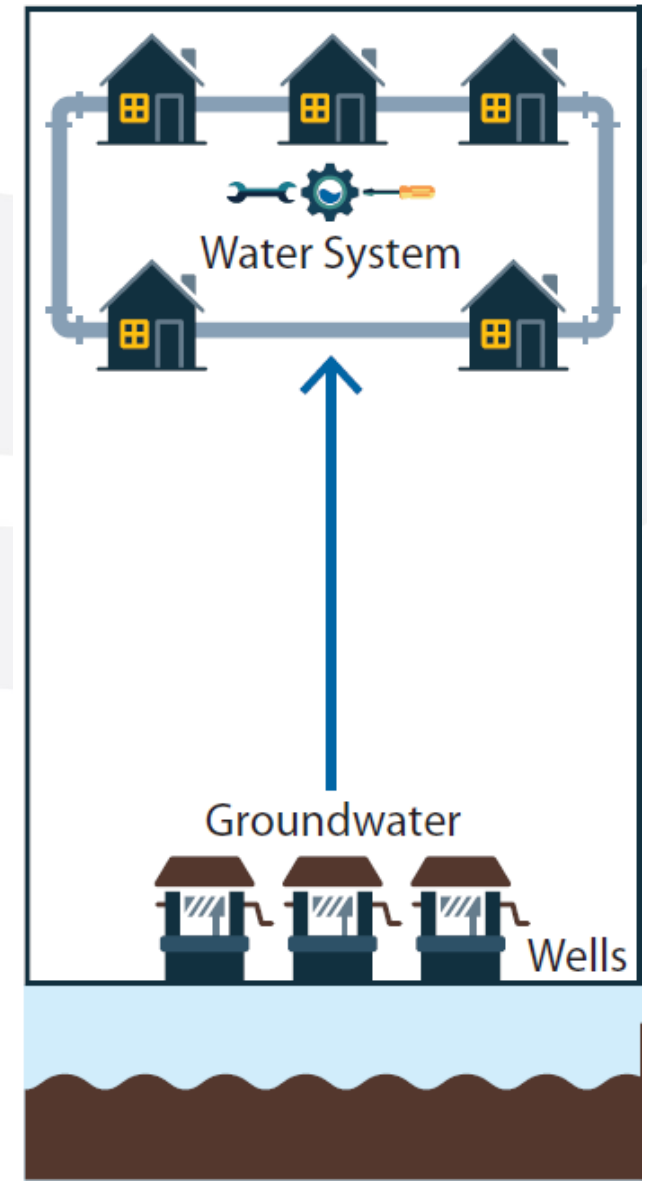


What is a feasibility study

- Purpose of the study
- Who did it
- Where to find the full report:
<https://bit.ly/saferntc>
- How to read the factsheet
- Key terms
 - 123TCP, DBCP
- Factsheet-led discussion
 - Proposed solutions
 - Costs
 - Capital cost = fixed, one-time expense for construction
 - O&M = operations and maintenance
 - SWTP = surface water treatment plant
 - Governance alternatives

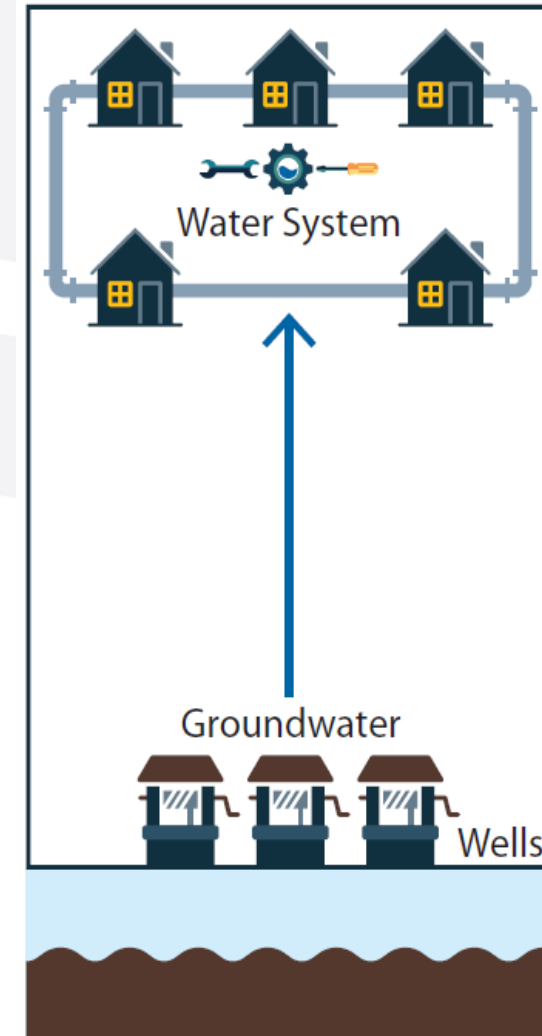
#1: Individual System Improvements and Physical Consolidation Loop

- Recommends extending connections to create a regionalized system
- Removes reliance on small wells and large storage tanks
- Removes pre-1990 wells and contaminated sources
- Alt 1 is **the base alternative**
 - This means the second and third alternative build off this proposed physical consolidation



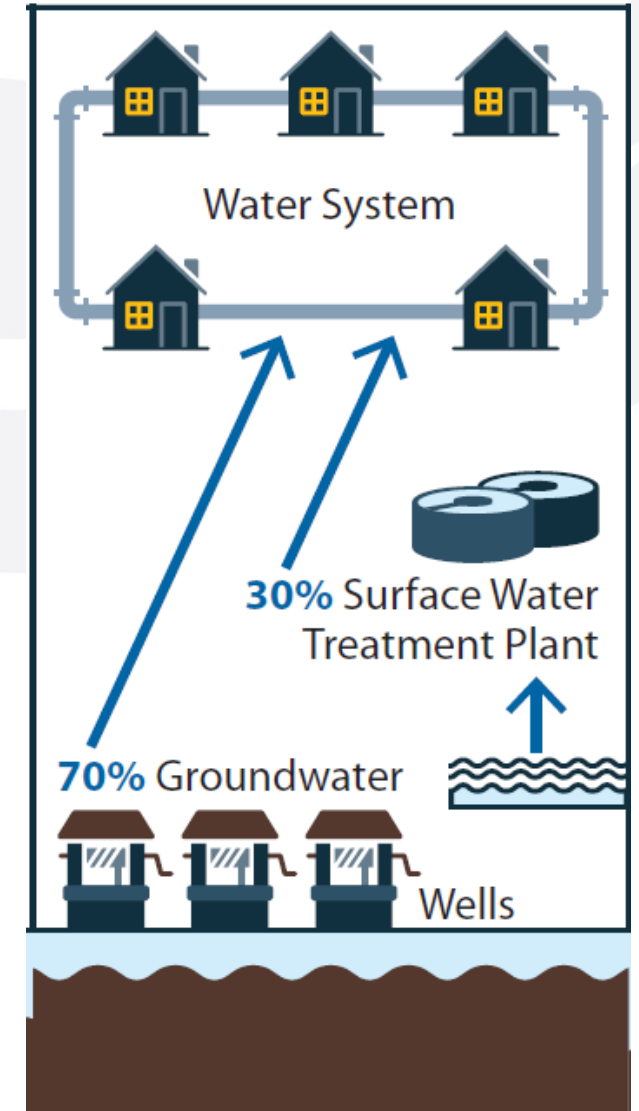
Group discussion: #1: Individual System Improvements and Physical Consolidation Loop

- What **do we like** about this alternative?
- What **concerns** do we have about this alternative?
- What **questions** do we have?



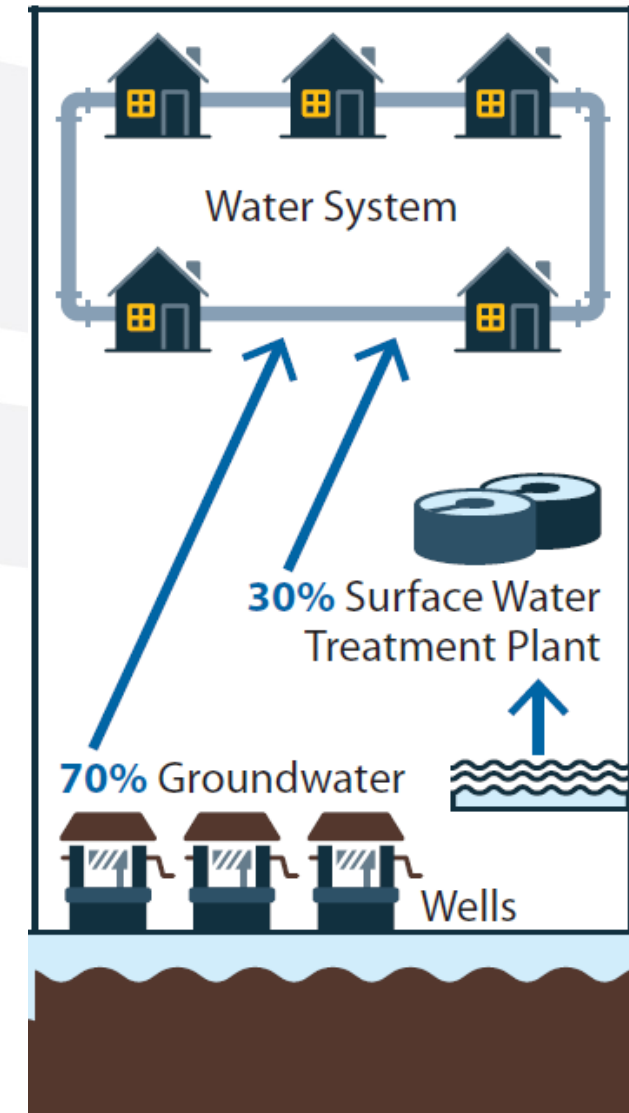
#2: Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant Partial Supply

- Same consolidation structure (a physical loop) as Alt 1
- Supplements groundwater sources with surface water, delivered via the Friant-Kern Canal
- Maintains wells in operation, so the communities can be less reliant on surface water
- Groundwater supplies will also provide water during drought years



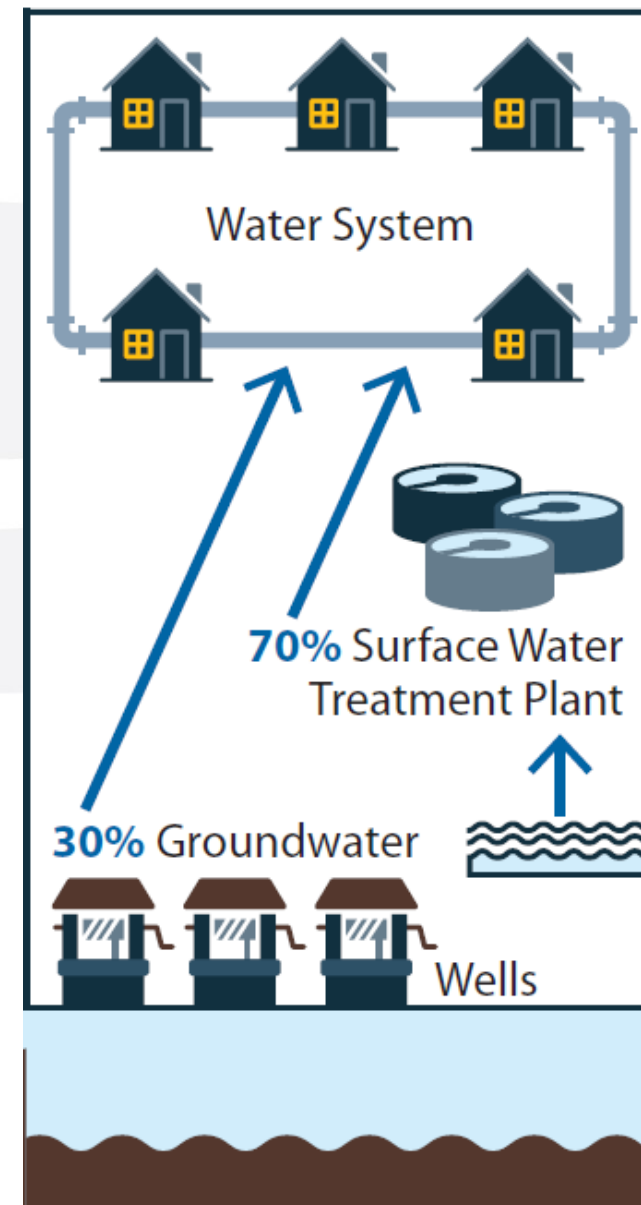
Group discussion: #2: Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant Partial Supply

- What **do we like** about this alternative?
- What **concerns** do we have about this alternative?
- What **questions** do we have?



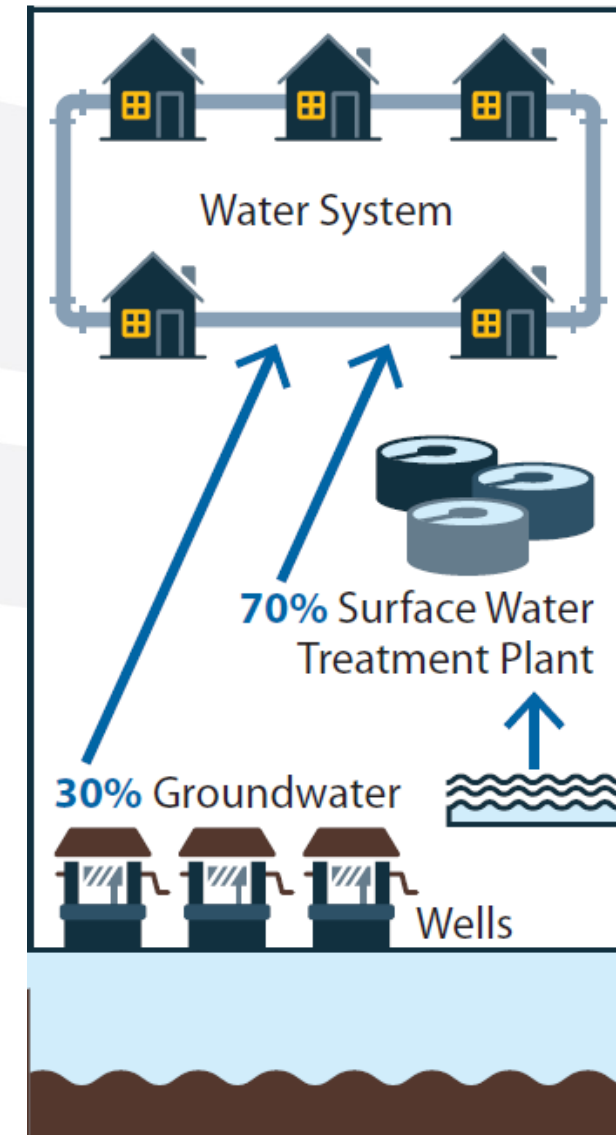
#3: Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant

- Same consolidation structure (a physical loop) as Alt 1
- Increases daily production capacity of the surface water treatment plant
 - accounts for the communities' entire water demand
- Requires securing an increased supply of surface water



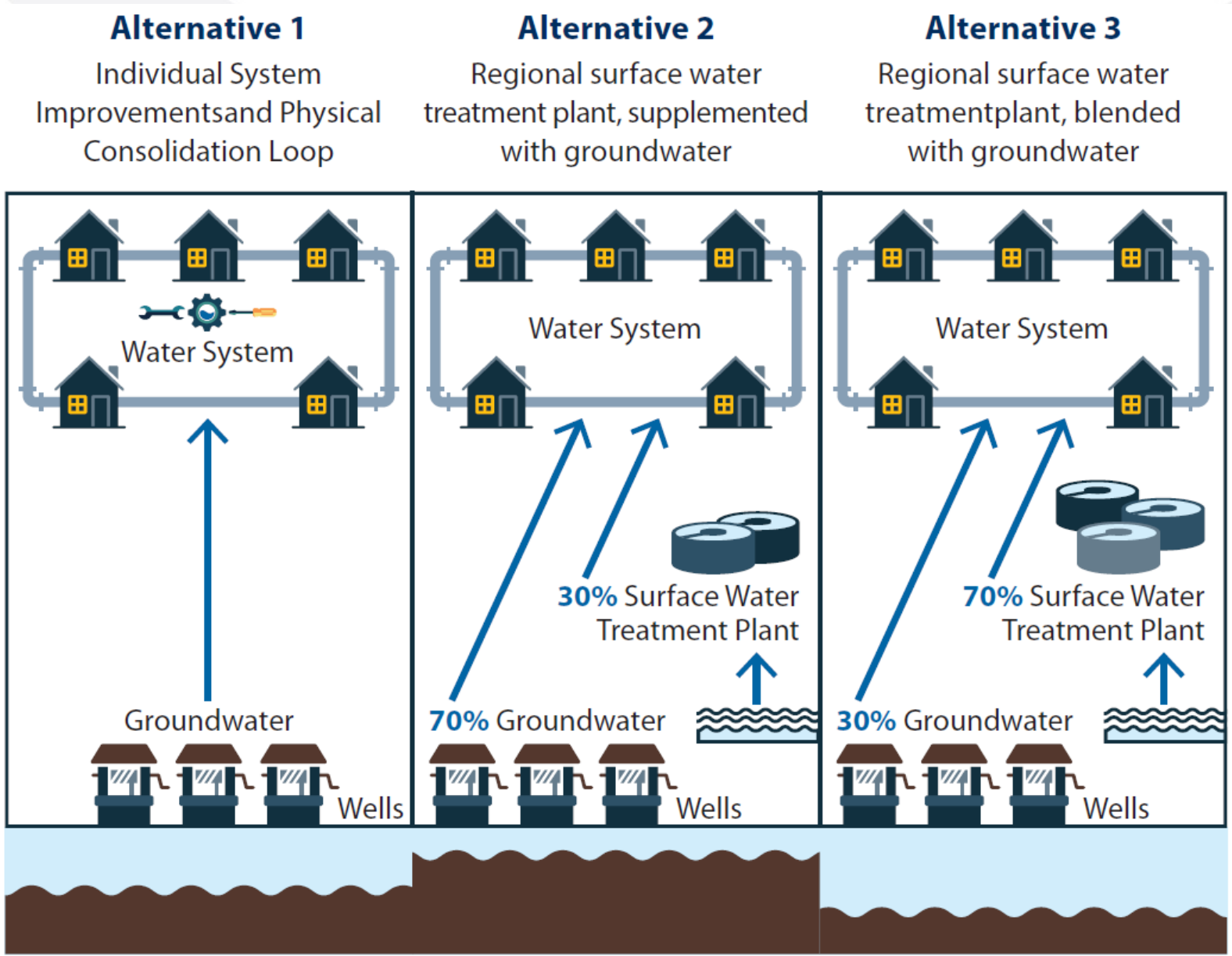
Group discussion: Regional Surface Water Treatment Plant

- What **do we like** about this alternative?
- What **concerns** do we have about this alternative?
- What **questions** do we have?



Group discussion on proposed alternatives

- Which do you feel best about? Why?
- Which do you have the most concerns about? Why?



What Makes a Competitive Funding Application?

- No funding is guaranteed
- What makes a competitive application?
 - If it addresses primary maximum contaminant levels
 - Size of communities is small
 - Sustainable governance structure
 - Reasonable cost per connection (per current Intended Use Plan limits)

What Makes a Competitive Funding Application?

- What makes a competitive application?
 - If a critical mass of the communities in the region participate
 - More customers = lower cost per customer
 - Sustainable operations and maintenance plan for water rate increases
 - Rates and proposed operations and maintenance costs that can be maintained
 - Rate study complete, rates adopted prior to beginning construction

Community Visioning

Johannus Reijnders



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Flip Chart Time

- Thoughts, concerns, discussion topics?
- Priorities for further meetings?
- What do you need to have a constructive conversation in June about governance?

Next Steps

Johannus Reijnders



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Process Next Steps

- By Aug 1st: Each water district to confirm their selected option and draft potential governance option
 - Adopt local board resolution
- Aug 27th: Joint community meeting to select preferred alternative
- September: Engineering report process starts
 - If the community commits to moving forward, the State Water Board may fund report
 - How much is it going to cost to operation and maintain the system
 - Preliminary rates study

Process Next Steps

- ~Fall 2025: Finalize governance decision
- Creation of governance entity that will apply for funding
- Completion of funding application: design of solution and environmental impact analysis
- Created governance entity develops and submits construction funding application

Guiding questions on shared vision—using flip charts

- Recap
- Next meeting(s)
 - **18 Jun in Orosi: Focus is on governance**
 - 27 Aug in Cutler: Select alternative; status of Cutler/Orosi consolidation
 - 9 Dec in Monson: Project next steps
- Where to find info
 - https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/districts/north_tulare.html
 - Fact sheet
 - Feasibility study
- How to prep for next meeting
 - Review factsheet, study, and governance report, attend local district board meetings to discuss
 - Communities and local boards meet to discuss these options and governance
 - Reach out with questions: safer@waterboards.ca.gov

Project Framing Next Steps

Laurel Firestone



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Q & A

How to Continue the Conversation

- 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
- Online Form: <https://bit.ly/saferntc>

Closing Meeting Local District Boards Roll Call

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- East Orosi Community Services District