

Revision to controversial water plan set for release

By Nick Baptista
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The East Bay Municipal Utility District next month will release a revised draft of its controversial 2040 water plan.

A new timeline for reconsideration of the proposed water plan, which was found to be environmentally deficient by a Sacramento County Superior Court judge last April, was announced Wednesday by Richard Sykes, EBMUD's water and natural resources director, during a Valley Springs Area Business Association and Chamber luncheon.

Sykes was the guest speaker at the luncheon and said he anticipates public workshops on the draft revision of the Program Environmental Impact Report will be scheduled for later this year or early next year in Amador and Calaveras counties.

The earlier plan called for expansion of Pardee Reservoir, which borders both counties. The proposed expansion of the reservoir would inundate nearly two miles of the Mokelumne River near Jackson, including a section known as the Middle Bar Run, and was opposed by the Foothill Conservancy, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance and Friends of the River in a lawsuit before Superior Court Judge Timothy M. Frawley.

The purpose of the 2040 Water Supply Management Program is to ensure an adequate supply to EBMUD customers even in drought conditions through the year 2040, Sykes said.

"We're responding to what the court wants us to do," he added.

He acknowledged the proposed expansion of Pardee Reservoir caused "a lot of anxiety" among the public and even within the EBMUD Board of Directors.

"It was their toughest decision within at least the past 10 years," he said.

Sykes anticipates the EBMUD board will consider adopting the revised PEIR in the early spring of next year.