



# County of Yolo

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## **DON SAYLOR** Supervisor, Second District

August 3, 2018

Dear North Davis Meadows residents,

Thank you to everyone who was able to join the North Davis Meadows (NDM) County Service Area (CSA) meeting on July 31, 2018. I understand how challenging the issue of providing safe, reliable drinking water and adequate fire protection is for the residents of your neighborhood. During the meeting we listened and responded to questions from NDM residents. As some neighbors were not available to join in person, I want to share with you the following information provided at the July 31 meeting.

- The Proposition 218 fees approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 20, 2018 to fund the City of Davis water system connection project remains in full effect.
- Currently, the application for a State Revolving Fund loan is under state review. If approved this year, the loan will be set at 1.8% interest per year for 30 years. We expect to hear a decision on the loan approval in October 2018.
- Under current law, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors is the decision-making body for County Service Areas, with input and recommendations from the CSA Advisory Committee.
- Yolo County's priorities on behalf of the neighborhood are protecting public health, welfare and safety; addressing critical service delivery and infrastructure needs; and ensuring a safe and reliable water supply.
- The NDM water system has exceeded maximum contaminant levels (MCL) per State of California water quality standards for nitrates, aluminum and iron since 2009, and for hexavalent chromium until the MCL was temporarily removed.
- The NDM water system currently does not provide minimum fire flow demand.
- At the May 3, 2018 neighborhood meeting, Yolo County staff committed to conduct a detailed assessment of the water project approved on March 20, 2018 and potential alternatives to that project. Yolo County staff presented the completed assessment report evaluating water system options for the North Davis Meadows CSA at the July 31 meeting.
- The report evaluated the risk and costs associated with three approaches, compiling previous CSA work into one document and including information regarding the new Point of Use (POU) regulations.
- The risk assessments in the report are based on the likelihood that future intervention by the CSA will be necessary to address the risk factors of water quality reliability, water supply reliability, anticipated longevity of the system, operations and maintenance costs and responsibility, and external factors – such as future regulations.

- The report was developed at no cost to the NDM CSA, based on the potential that learnings from this exercise may help inform the County's work with other communities in Yolo County. Costs for any further study or assessment work by County staff will be charged to the CSA through normal procedures.
- Since the neighborhood meeting on May 3, 2018, my office met four times with a smaller group of neighbors. This group included residents with a broad spectrum of perspectives. This Feedback Group has provided feedback, asked questions, and reviewed the NDM water project costs owed to the County. In addition, this Feedback Group reviewed the Draft Assessment Report and provided comments.
- At one of these four meetings (June 13, 2018), we met with representatives of the City of Davis Fire Department and the City of Davis Public Works and received support from both parties, including the Davis Fire Marshal, to reduce the fire flow requirement from 1,500 gallons per minute (gpm) for 2 hours to 1,000 gpm for 1 hour. The City of Davis Public Works staff originally directed the modeling to be at 1,500 gpm based on the City design standard for all water connections and the engineering consultant carried out the design based on this instruction. With the reduction in the fire flow requirement authorized during the June 13 meeting, we expect construction cost savings of \$100,000 to \$300,000 once the engineers are authorized to update the design documents with new modeling parameters.
- Some NDM residents requested that a single exploratory well be drilled to gather specific information and that the cost of drilling be the subject of an additional Proposition 218 process.
- During the July 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, Yolo County staff were asked to share their recommendation to the community and Board of Supervisors. The response was they recommend certainty to public health and safety with a long-term solution. The only solution they would recommend is one that includes a connection to the City of Davis for drinking water and fire protection.

Yolo County staff and I engaged in this assessment period willing to change course if given a viable solution with substantial consensus to support the project financially. As I've learned more through this process, I don't see a viable long-term alternative to the approved project. An exploratory well is not a solution – it is simply a point in time assessment of one well location (two will be needed) and an option that has many unknowns and risks. I can't recommend that Yolo County embrace a short-term strategy to address long-term public health and safety needs.

However, staying the course of full consolidation to meet public health and safety needs does not prevent the community from evaluating other options to identify lower-cost irrigation solutions. For example, residents could explore individual ag wells on their property. Residents could also look into converting one of the existing wells into an irrigation-only well and new irrigation connections to homes either underground or an alternative solution. All of this could be managed through the CSA as in the past, or the community could become a Community Services District (CSD) which is a separate legal entity self-governed by an independent board of residents. Community Service Districts are public agencies and are subject to similar rules for procurement and open meetings. The community could also form a Home Owners Association or a private mutual water company which has different authorities and requirements. These options would empower residents to own the decision-making function, operations and accounting responsibilities.

Below is a summary of the follow up actions we committed to at the July 31, 2018 meeting:

1. Posting on the NDM Water website ([www.YoloCounty.org/North-Davis-Meadows-CSA](http://www.YoloCounty.org/North-Davis-Meadows-CSA)) a summary of City of Davis and UC Davis wells and their status – specifically how many have been out of compliance for water quality, depth of the wells and age.
2. Posting on the NDM Water website the requirements for individual (or shared by a few neighbors) ag wells – including application of setback requirements to abandoned leach fields.
3. The County will explore the request from some members of the community about the process, cost and timeline for a Proposition 218 for the neighborhood to fund an exploratory well(s) through the CSA.
4. I'm willing to attend a meeting with the key informants identified by NDM residents to hear perspectives about the viability and cost-effectiveness of deep wells.
5. Updating the Assessment Report to correct the narrative reference identified during the July 31, 2018 meeting.

Thank you for your engagement on this difficult and important topic. Many hours have been spent by members of your community and County staff for the past nine years seeking a solution to meet water quality needs. It is my understanding that the CSA Advisory Committee will schedule regular meetings moving forward to continue to monitor the water project and other CSA matters.

In shared service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don Saylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don Saylor, Yolo County Supervisor, District 2