

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A four-member panel of elected officials and experts Thursday night proved that water is the life force of our society and that meeting to protect it is the driest thing that can be done on an evening.

The discussion was presented by the local League of Women Voters and it was the second year the league presented an update on-water at Cal College's Seson House.

Speakers were Stanford Professor David Freyberg who pointed out the wrong places, San Francisco City Councilman John Laird who addressed a 50-member audience on local planning, regional government and Brandlin who spoke on Pullie studies and San Lorenzo Valley director David Resnick-Sannes who discussed Proposition 13.

The new Proposition 13 on the ballot — as opposed to the Proposition that brought property tax relief in 1975 — would in some ways do for water what the Coastal Initiative did for (or took away from) California coast.

It would mandate conservation

New dams and stream diversion would need the approval of the state Water Resources Control Board. Water districts and cities also would have to prove they need the new water even though they are conserving what they have as well as they possibly can.

Customers would be required to pay the full cost of water delivery. Historically, water has been subsidized through property taxes and federal project grants.

Prop. 13 says the water board must take into consideration the welfare of the fishes in the streams when applications for water rights come in and it also gives all citizens a legislative means of protesting the water board's actions.

Prop. 13 says all water purveyors must attempt to meet the spirit of the new 13 in its attempts at conservation.

A member of the audience warned that the water initiative would usurp local city and district controls over major water sources and Resnick-Sannes explained that the state decisions are not expected to be "onerous."

Laird pointed out that he is a locally elected official and therefore is sup-

Laird said it parallels the coastal situation in 1978 when local authorities were letting the coast be lost to development and the state had to be called in.

Whether or not the Pajaro Basin should be one of the 11 that are listed as "over-drafted" has been called into question. a state meeting has been set in Watsonville in October.

However, Brandlin said the regional study — through the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments — is based on the belief that the overdraft is continually occurring.

Plans are to pump water back into the sandier soils at the periphery of the basin so that it will seep into the rivers and pools that lie underground.

She said the Pajaro riverbed wasn't very porous and not much water seeped down, but that river water might be pumped to the sandier soils to replenish the aquifer.

Laird said the first cooperative effort among north county agencies was underway and that a firm would soon be

hired to study the availability of water and how much will be needed in coming years for the growing county population.

He noted that since growth control regulations are in place in most jurisdictions, the planners will have a fairly good idea of how much water to plan for.

Laird said that some areas will soon need water and complained that the public is not kept well informed by the press on the water issue.

One means of informing the public would be to have everyone become familiar with a "water atlas" of the state, Freyberg said.

The atlas includes a state map that is color-coded to show where the rain falls. It falls in the north state hills and, as Freyberg pointed out, most of the people and the grand farms of California are in the dry areas of mid- and south state.

"California has one of the most amazing (water engineered) systems in the world," Freyberg said.

He indicated a better approach would be to look at conservation and regulation, today, and slow down on the aduaducts and towering dams.

League member Dana Thompson moderated the meeting.