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'I don't trust the water still': Bakersfield residents living in fear after water shutdown

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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KGET) — An east Bakersfield community left without water for days last month, managed to get the water back on but not without fears of a shutoff happening again.

Residents of the Shirley Lane community voiced concerns at a town hall meeting Wednesday night.

"Consolidation agreements were sent out to consolidated water systems last week," said Melissa Bergen, of Self-Help Enterprises.

A community overwhelmed with water woes was overjoyed to hear the news of a larger water system potentially taking over the smaller system. Once finding out the consolidation won't be for potentially another two years after the plan has already been in the works since 2016, more frustrations rose to the surface.

"It's already been off once or twice since it's been back on, because the pipes burst. They are old, they do need replacing and I think they just put a Band-Aid on it and keep going, instead of really fixing it," said resident Angie Peeples.

Many residents shared they don't drink the water and fear another two years or longer under their current water utility, Victory Mutual Water Company.

"I don't drink the water, it still has been a problem. The pipes, you know, they still get contaminated," said Jesus Rodriguez. "I'm sure if you boil the water, you'll still get some residue at the bottom, so I don't trust the water still."

The event was held by Supervisor Leticia Perez at Shirley Lane Elementary, directly across the street from the President of Victory Mutual Water Company, who did not attend the meeting.

Which residents say, is a clear message in itself.

"It's kind of discerning because I don't know if we're going to have water tomorrow," said Peeples.

"The fact that victory mutual is not here, shows that they don't care. They don't want to be responsible," said Rodriguez.

According to Supervisor Perez, her office will be holding these meetings each month over the next six months.