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### Proposed water-district merger for Parker, Stonegate reflects expected trend

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One thing that Parker and Stonegate Village have in common is debt, about \$245 million between them.

Another is pressure to line up new water supplies and improve their treatment of sewage. The southern suburbs currently depend on dwindling water from underground aquifers.

Now, utility managers propose to merge water systems to spread debt and increase efficiency. It's the sort of consolidation that industry leaders anticipate, in Colorado and nationwide, as problems with water supply and aging pipes intensify.

But the Parker-Stonegate deal has set off a political storm. On Wednesday night, more than 170 Stonegate residents attended the latest informational meeting, and a majority indicated in an informal vote that they opposed the merger.

"Nobody in our neighborhood understands what is going on," said Stonegate resident Lisa Nejedlow, whose residential water pressure recently decreased sharply. "I don't want to go with Parker. I don't trust them. I think they have too much debt (\$214 million) and they are trying to go into other people's pockets."

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