



YUROK TRIBE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Final dam removal accord struck on the banks of Klamath River

Broad support gives Tribe hope that dams will come out by 2020

Today, the States of Oregon and California, PacifiCorp, the Yurok Tribe, the Karuk Tribe, and the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce are signing an amendment to the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA). If approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the agreement will initiate the removal of four dams on the Klamath River and one of the biggest salmon restoration efforts in US history.

“Dam removal is a key element of large-scale fish restoration efforts on the Klamath, and we believe it puts the people of the Klamath Basin back on a path toward lasting prosperity.” said Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr.

Yurok Chairman O’Rourke, Oregon Governor Kathleen Brown, California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr., PacifiCorp President and CEO Stefan Bird, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, NOAA Administrator Dr. Kathryn Sullivan as well as Congressman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael), non-governmental organizations and other Klamath River tribes participated in the signing event on the Yurok Reservation.

The newly signed dam removal agreement seeks to use existing funding and the same timeline as the original agreement. It is expected to be filed with FERC by July 1, and will be vetted using established, public processes. The amended KHSA places the states of Oregon and California as lead entities and forms an alternate entity to dismantle the dams by 2020. The plans for the actual removal of the hydroelectric facilities will have to comply with all federal and state regulations associated with large, landscape-altering projects.

Important elements of the Amended KHSA:

- Does not end the FERC process; but changes it from a relicensing procedure to a decommissioning procedure;
- PacifiCorp agrees to transfer title of the dams to a newly formed entity that will then apply for a surrender and decommissioning process with FERC and also take on any liabilities associated with the removal of the dams;
- Does not require any new federal funding or Congressional action or authorizations;

- Adheres to the original KHSA timeline of dam removal in the year 2020;
- Does not suspend or alter any existing environmental laws including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act or others;
- Does not waive, alter, or terminate any Tribal water or fishing rights.

The state and federal representatives also signed a second pact, the Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement (KPFA), which is designed to help upper basin irrigators properly prepare for the return of salmon to the upper basin by constructing fish screens as well as other appropriate measures to protect and restore fish populations. Although the KPFA does not address water issues, it is intended to set the stage for more detailed talks about water, fish restoration, and water quality issues that still need to be solved in the Klamath Basin. “We’re are fully committed to developing sustainable solutions that work for both fish and farms,” said Yurok Tribal Chairman O’Rourke. Reconnecting salmon, steelhead, and lamprey with more than 300 miles of historic habitat, and ameliorating the water quality problems caused by the dams, is a primary first step in a process to heal the Klamath River and create stability in the basin. .

The KPFA acknowledges that additional actions are required to restore the Klamath Basin’s fisheries, fulfill trust responsibilities to the Tribes, and sustain the region’s farming and ranching industry. Many of these efforts will require federal legislation. The KPFA’s signatories and supporters are committed to working over the coming year with interested Klamath Basin stakeholders to craft complimentary agreements that offer comprehensive solutions to these difficult problems.

In 2010, Klamath Basin stakeholders signed the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA) and the KHSA. The pacts were carefully crafted by all major Klamath River stakeholders to put an end to the perpetual water war in the basin. Members of the US Congress from California and Oregon, on two different occasions, introduced legislation that would have authorized the agreements, yet Congress failed to act on the bills. The diverse Klamath coalition, undeterred by congressional inaction, convened a meeting to discuss the possibility of a long-lasting solution for the basin. The amended KHSA and the 2016 Klamath Power and Facilities Agreements are the products of those cooperative discussions and are part of a greater plan for the basin.

“The Klamath River is our lifeline and it is inextricably linked to the health and welfare of the Yurok people,” Chairman O’Rourke said. “It will be a truly historic day when we see salmon travel from the Klamath’s headwaters to the sea.”