

**THE SISKIYOU
DAILY NEWS**

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April 07, 2016 8:55AM

Governor signs new, amended Klamath dam removal agreements

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On Wednesday, numerous state and tribal leaders convened in Klamath – an unincorporated area in Del Norte County where the mouth of the Klamath River meets the Pacific – to announce two new agreements related to the Klamath dams, one revised and one entirely new. The first of these is the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, the second is the newly introduced Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement.

The amendments to the KHSA will remove liability for PacifiCorp and will transfer the responsibility of implementing the KHSA from the U.S. Congress to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Members of the California and Oregon delegations introduced legislation in the past two congresses to advance the KHSA along with two additional Klamath agreements, but congress adjourned last year without taking action on the bills.

The timeline for the removal of the dams will be the same as was proposed in the KHSA originally, with the removal of the four dams – three in California and one in Oregon – to be completed by 2020.

The KPFA deals with the anticipated effects of both dam removal and the subsequent reintroduction of the salmon population. The document addresses how these changes will impact water, fisheries, land, agriculture, refuges, and economic sustainability issues in the Klamath Basin.

Parties to the agreement include the states of California and Oregon, both states' departments of fish and wildlife and the U.S. Department of the Interior, among other agencies, as well as any person or entity who was a signatory to the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement or to the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement, or is a Klamath Reclamation Project contractor.

The KPFA states that its parties "anticipate substantial programs for introduction or reintroduction of species not currently present in the Upper Klamath Basin, and substantial habitat restoration activities or programs, resulting in unique circumstances that could have potential regulatory or other legal consequences for users of water and land in the Upper Klamath Basin under Applicable Law, including new or modified regulatory obligations that could affect the ability to divert or use or dispose of water or the ability to utilize land productively."

The KPFA goes on to document its parties' commitment to take every reasonable and legal step to avoid or minimize adverse impacts that might occur to users of water or land associated with the Klamath Reclamation Project "from introduction or reintroduction of aquatic species to currently unoccupied habitats or areas, or from habitat restoration activities."

In the event that unforeseen consequences result "from reintroduction or restoration activities," the agreement reads, "the Parties agree to meet and confer ... to determine any necessary future actions."

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, California Governor Jerry Brown and Oregon Governor Kate Brown each spoke during Wednesday's meeting, all expressing complete support and enthusiasm for the amended KHSA and KPFA, lauding the agreements as a major and essential step forward in restoration of the Klamath River, its salmon population and the lives of native peoples whose culture and livelihood hinges upon the Klamath's natural resources.

However, many state officials in Northern California are displeased with Wednesday's announcement and assert that the agreements do not address the full scope of issues surrounding the removal of the Klamath dams.

In an April 6 press release, U.S. Representative Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) stated, "The overwhelming majority of residents of the Klamath Basin, those who are actually impacted, have been cut out of this process in favor of environmental extremists, bureaucrats in Sacramento and Washington, and a taxpayer bailout for billionaire Warren Buffett ... I remain committed to working toward a comprehensive solution to the region's water supply challenges that protects agriculture and electric ratepayers. However, dam removal does nothing to address these issues."

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors also expressed their disapproval of the agreements in a letter to Jewell and Brown, saying, "It is sad and ironic that an agreement that started out to address fish and water supplies in the Upper Basin has degenerated into something where the main focus is the removal of four dams on the lower river and water supply reliability is unaddressed."

The board goes on to state, "This attempt to breathe new life into the failed efforts of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement ... is yet another misguided waste of time and resources for everyone with an interest in securing the future of water supplies, water quality, and sustainable fisheries in the Klamath Basin."

The board concluded the letter by urging Secretary Jewell and Governor Brown not to sign "yet another unauthorized and incomplete agreement to once again raise false hope that a real and lasting Klamath River fix is finally at hand when a real solution is still desperately needed."



PHOTO / SUBMITTED PHOTO / KONRAD FISHER

A multitude of state and federal agency representatives, along with tribal, fisheries and environmental groups gathered Wednesday for the announcement of new agreements seeking the removal of four dams on the Klamath River.

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