February 15, 2022

Governor Gavin Newsom

1303 10th Street, Suite 1173

Sacramento, CA 95814

Jim Root, President

Klamath River Renewal Corporation

2001 Addison Street, Suite 317

Berkeley, CA 94704

**Subject: Klamath Dams Issue List**

Dear Governor Newsom and President Root:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is writing to express that it has significant, unaddressed concerns regarding anticipated adverse impacts from the State’s and Klamath River Renewal Corporation’s (KRRC) proposed Klamath River Dam Removal Project (Project).

In 2011, Condit Dam, a 125-foot-high hydroelectric structure in the state of Washington, was removed. At the time, it was the largest dam removal in U.S. history, and it released millions of cubic yards of sediment, impacted local groundwater wells, impacted air quality, resulted in the loss of lake-front property and recreational activities, and caused destruction to wetlands and water habitat.

Since 2017, Siskiyou County has engaged with representatives of both the State and KRRC in multiple discussions and through written correspondence to avoid the mistakes resulting from the Condit Dam removal, and to make the State and KRRC aware of the County’s list of adverse project impacts (enclosed), the risk they pose to the County and its residents, and the need to mitigate the impacts. As the entities that seek to hold the Lower Klamath Project license for the purpose of carrying out the removal of the four lower Klamath River dams, it is KRRC and the State’s responsibilities to resolve these outstanding issues and provide safeguards to the County.

Siskiyou County is calling on the State and/or KRRC to establish a community funding pool, in addition to the “Local Impact Mitigation Fund” (LIMF), to address lost property value and economic development. It is our understanding that KRRC will be establishing the LIMF to address reduced well production, issues associated with instability around the reservoir rims, and increases to the risk of flooding for dwellings downstream of the dams, among other risks; however, funding details, including the overall fund amount, have not been communicated to the County. As such, we are requesting that the additional community funding pool requested above be in the minimum amount of $25 million be allocated to the effort.

Siskiyou County anticipates that dam removal will result in a significant reduction to the County’s property tax revenue. This reduction will result from property value loss following dam removal and from the transfer of Parcel B lands to the State. A reduction in property tax revenue will devastate our already stressed County budget. The State’s assistance is needed to implement a project or program

that will provide a continuous generation of replacement funding to the County, and provide opportunities for economic improvement of river communities. In addition, we are requesting that the State of California provide Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes in arrears, and continue to make future payments for properties in Siskiyou County held by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. As of fiscal year 2017/2018 the total amount in arrears is $825,263.92.

We seek the State’s cooperation and assistance in the passage of legislation that would provide funding for the development of Safe Harbor, or similar, agreements for farmers and ranchers who irrigate within the Klamath Watershed. Such action would both provide assurances for listed species and would provide protections for irrigators who are a driving factor for Siskiyou and other neighboring county economies. Legislation should include adequate funding to complete actions critical to a successful Safe Harbor, or similar, agreement, which includes eyed egg injection, restoration of the high mountain lakes, groundwater recharge/banking, among others.

We recognize that KRRC and the County have successfully completed the Roads and Bridges Memorandum of Understanding Between Siskiyou County, California and the Klamath River Renewal Corporation which serves to secure KRRC’s commitment to 2.2 million dollars in preemptive road upgrades, secured reimbursement for staff time related to future roads and bridges related monitoring, approvals and inspections; secured KRRC’s commitment to comply with a heavy load permit; and secured favorable insurance indemnification and hold harmless terms. We also recognize that the local California Department of Fish and Wildlife Office has been supportive of the County in their efforts to apply for grant funding to perform a feasibility study for the High Mountain Lakes, and they have a solid understating of the watershed function and the importance of the project towards sustained improvement of fish populations. This letter of request is to draw attention to the need to address outstanding issues that would result from removal of the four lower Klamath River dams.

Please reach out to Elizabeth Nielsen, Deputy County Administrator, at enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us or (530) 842-8012.

This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on February 15, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Brandon A. Criss, Chair

Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Doug LaMalfa

 Honorable Jared Huffman

 Honorable Dianne Feinstein

 Honorable Brian Dahle

 Honorable Megan Dahle