May 3, 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 Dam Removal Impacts**

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). These concerns and impacts are most recently detailed in the comments provided by the County, through its outside legal counsel Nossaman LLP, in response to the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Proposed Lower Klamath Project Surrender and Remova*l (enclosed).

Since 2017, Siskiyou County has engaged with representatives of both the State and KRRC in multiple discussions and through written correspondence to make the State and KRRC aware of the County’s list of adverse project impacts, the risk they pose to the County and its residents, and the need to mitigate the impacts, in the event that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approves decommissioning of the Project. We want to be clear that decommissioning is not in the best interest of our residents, especially those whose residences are located along the reservoirs provided by the dams (including but not limited to Copco Lake, R Ranch and Klamath River Country Estates), those properties that will be subject to flood plain designation below Iron Gate Dam, and those whose livelihoods depend on utilization of our natural resources. 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’s and the State’s responsibility to resolve these outstanding issues and through this letter we are requiring that the following asks be met.

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 mitigation fund 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 and the LIMF be in the minimum amount of $50 million to be allocated to the effort, to assist in addressing the detrimental impacts that will be inflicted upon the County and many of its residents.

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. As such, we are requesting funding in the amount of $25

million directly to the County, and a commitment from the State to assist in developing a replacement industry for the County. In addition, we are requesting that the State of California provide payment for 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.

Farmers and ranchers who irrigate throughout the Klamath Watershed are depending on the State’s commitment to ensure that they are protected from issues arising from dam removal. In 2021, staff from the State Water Resources Control Board stated to our Board that irrigators will not be held liable to provide additional flows to supplement decreased Klamath River flows resulting from dam removal. There must be a legally binding instrument to memorialize such. In addition, we require legislation to complete actions critical to aiding in the survival of fisheries species, which includes eyed egg injection, restoration of the high mountain lakes, groundwater recharge/banking, and off stream storage. Necessary agricultural water infrastructure must be constructed in strategic locations throughout the Klamath Watershed, including the Klamath Project and the Scott and Shasta Valleys to meet all needs, including farming, ranching, and fisheries. Off-stream storage and recharge systems must be designed and constructed in a way so that abundant winter flows may be stored to augment late-summer flows and support salmon migration.

We recognize that KRRC and the County have successfully completed the Roads and Bridges Memorandum of Understanding, which the State of California supported and 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 outstanding issues that would result from removal of the four lower Klamath River dams. It is our plea that these needs are addressed and met for the livelihoods of a population who are the backbone of Siskiyou County.

This letter in no way indicates Siskiyou County’s support for decommissioning of the Project. The County’s position has not changed; we still oppose dam removal, and our previous comments through the FERC process and correspondence with KRRC and the State expressly acknowledge that position. Please respond to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days of receipt of this letter. This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on May 3, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Brandon A. Criss, Chair

Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Doug LaMalfa

 Honorable Cliff Bentz

 Honorable Jared Huffman

 Honorable Brian Dahle

 Honorable Megan Dahle