Shasta Valley Program Review Committee

c/o National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

1133 Fifteenth St NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

**Subject: Shasta River Fish Passage and Instream Enhancement Project**

Dear Shasta Valley Program Review Committee,

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors understands that the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District (SVRCD) is submitting the proposal, *Shasta River Fish Passage and Instream Enhancement Project*(Project)*,* to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s 2023 Klamath Basin Salmon Restoration – Shasta Valley Regional Conservation Partnership Program. This program is designed to fund projects with a water infrastructure improvement component that support the recovery of salmonids in the Shasta River Watershed.

The Project will benefit salmonids, including SONCC coho Salmon, a state and federal ESA listed species. The benefits include:

* Reduction in diversion volume from approximately 10 cfs to 6 cfs, rewatering several miles of the Shasta River by up to 4 cfs or more,
* Removal of flashboard dam would improve access to over 36 miles of habitat critical for salmonid spawning and juvenile rearing. This includes 15 miles of Shasta River mainstem, over 21 miles of important tributaries with high intrinsic potential, including 6.7 miles of spring fed creeks (Big Springs Creek, Little Springs Creek, Kettle Creek, Hole in the Ground Creek) and over 15 miles of Parks Creek, all of which are upstream of the flashboard dam,
* Reduction of juvenile fish entrainment by relocation of fish screening facility, 1,650 feet down-ditch, to on-channel location,
* Conversion of approximately 17,800 feet of open-earthen irrigation ditch to buried pipeline, includes 5,700 feet of pipeline that will ensure only land with provable riparian water rights are irrigated,
* Expected improvement in all phases of irrigation management including tailwater reduction,
* Utilize independent flow gauging data and continuous diversion pump records to ensure conserved water remains instream for the benefit of salmonids and aquatic habitat.

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors supports improving irrigation efficiency and the reasonable use of water on lands with proven water rights.

The SVRCD is entirely grant funded and has completed several projects of similar scope and size in the past using public funds. Adequate funding for implementation, as well as project design, planning, and permitting is essential for a robust analysis of water usage, and proper design of a project that will have a large positive impact on salmonids in the Shasta River. We understand that the SVRCD has already been awarded implementation funds for this project through the Wildlife Conservation Board.

This Project is uniquely situated at the downstream end of the critical spawning and juvenile salmonid rearing habitat. Successful implementation of this project would extend this critical habitat boundary farther downstream, increasing the available habitat with ideal conditions for salmonids.

Additional benefits expected by converting the open-earthen irrigation ditch to a buried pipeline are:

* Improvement to aquatic habitat, water temperature, and dissolved oxygen levels through reduced tailwater return and rewatering of several miles of the Shasta River,
* Improved control of irrigation timing and river management capabilities,
* Additional water conservation opportunities through improvements to stockwater and irrigation efficiency,
* Improved streamflow management capabilities.

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors fully supports the SVRCD’s Project proposal and has every confidence that it will be successfully implemented and bring positive benefits to this critical salmonid spawning and rearing reach of the Shasta River.

This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on April 4, 2023, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Ed Valenzuela, Chair

Board of Supervisors