Shasta Valley Program Review Committee

c/o National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

1133 Fifteenth St NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

**Subject: Huseman Ditch Pipeline and Water Efficiency Improvement 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, *Huseman Ditch Pipeline and Water Efficiency Improvement 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, by rewatering approximately five miles of the Shasta River by a minimum of 1,030 acre-feet annually. This will be accomplished by:

* Convert 14,600’ of open-earthen irrigation ditch to a buried pipeline,
* Pipeline would prevent ditch loss through seepage, ditch evaporation and transpiration,
* Pipeline would remain charged even when diversion was inactive, reducing the time throughout the year the diversion would need to be active,
* Dedicate water, conserved through improved irrigation efficiency by piping ditch, to instream use for the benefit of salmonids and aquatic habitat,
* Utilize a forbearance agreement to uphold a 1.9 cfs reduction in diversion rate, and allowing 0.5 cfs of cold spring water, currently used for irrigation and stockwater purposes, to flow freely to the Shasta River,
* 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 SVRCD has budgeted for substantial funding for the express purpose of identifying and evaluating project alternatives, including moving the Huseman Ditch Co. point of diversion downstream several miles. This alternative project configuration would leave a total of over 3,000 acre-feet in the Shasta River for an additional 3.4 miles.

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. The SVRCD has already been awarded $760,000 of implementation funds for this project through DWR’s IRWM Prop 1 Round 2 funding opportunity. The Project was submitted through the North Coast Resource Partnership (IRWM group for the North Coast Region) whose Technical Peer Review Committee, made up of resource professionals, engineers, and Tribal representatives, reviewed the proposal and scored it very high.

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 water quality and aquatic habitat through reduced tailwater,
* Improved control of irrigation timing,
* Additional water conservation opportunities through improvements to stockwater, and irrigation efficiency (Huseman Ditch Co. members who have not paid dues will not benefit from seeping ditch, effectively taking land out of production and further reducing inactive diversion time),
* Improved streamflow management capabilities,
* Thermal refugia at confluence of spring flow with Shasta River,
* And more.

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