



# COUNTY OF SISKIYOU

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## COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Angela Davis, County Administrator  
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November 8, 2023

Michael Harris  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
601 Locust St.  
Redding, CA 96001

**RE: Siskiyou Board of Supervisors Request – Assurances for Fisheries along Klamath River**

Mr. Harris,

At a Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors meeting in July 2023, a board member raised concerns regarding fisheries health after removal of the Lower Klamath Dams is complete. As stated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (the Department) in previous conversations with the County and in the Project's environmental documents (such as the Biological Assessment, and Final California Environmental Quality Act Environmental Impact Report, etc.), the Department is aware that there will be a short-term deleterious effect on Klamath River Chinook Salmon. This decrease in salmonid populations is expected to continue for years after the drawdown. However, the salmonid population is anticipated to return to the Klamath River and its tributaries in greater numbers once the new Fall Creek Hatchery begins releasing individuals, and sediment transport from the reservoirs is complete.

With the high levels of uncertainty regarding how quickly and by how much the salmonid population will rebound after dam removal, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of their water user constituents, are looking for some assurances from the Department that any fluctuations in the salmonid population within the Klamath River and its tributaries will not be attributed to the water users. The Board suggested an MOU between the County, Department, and the federal government (National Marine Fisheries Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service) that clearly outlines responsibilities for changes in the salmonid populations and provides assurances and protections to water users. However, after conversations with the Department, it has become clear that a MOU may not be the best avenue for the Board and water users to receive assurances from the government that non-point source fish kills or population decreases, or other instances of take will be ascribed to their water consumption.

The County is requesting continued engagement with the Department on this matter. We are also requesting that the that the Department work internally to present the County with a formal assurance on this matter and continue frequent dialogue with County staff and their Contractor, Chelsea Murphy, CKM Environmental. Please reach out with any additional questions, or if you need further information on this matter.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Elizabeth Nelsen

Deputy County Administrator