

PRESS RELEASE

KARUK TRIBE

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FEDERAL AGENCIES ISSUE FINAL MANDATES FOR KLAMATH DAMS *Feds mandate ladders; costs officially favor dam removal*

Happy Camp, CA – Today, the Department of Interior and Commerce filed the final mandatory terms and conditions that must be met in order for PacifiCorp to relicense the Klamath Dams. Although the agencies do not have the authority under the Federal Power Act to mandate dam removal, they can and did mandate fishways and ladders. Klamath Basin Tribes and other dam removal advocates are pleased since the cost of the prescribed ladders and fishways makes dam removal an economically favorable alternative to relicensing.

“We applaud the Departments of Commerce and Interior for fulfilling their obligation to protect and restore the Klamath River,” said Leaf Hillman, Vice Chairman of the Karuk Tribe. “Now it’s time for PacifiCorp President Bill Fehrman to make good on his commitment to protect his ratepayers from higher costs and simply remove these fish killing dams.”

Last August as members of the Karuk, Hoopa, Yurok and Klamath Tribes protested the international hydropower industry’s symposium in Portland, PacifiCorp President William Fehrman released a statement that concluded with, “We have heard the Tribes’ concerns. We are not opposed to dam removal or other settlement opportunities as long as our customers are not harmed and our property rights are respected.”

In December the California Energy Commission and the U.S. Department of Interior filed an economic report with the Federal Energy Relicensing Commission which concluded that dam removal would be cheaper, by \$100 million, than relicensing. The analysis included the cost of replacing the electricity the dams generate with other currently available sources.

Last month PacifiCorp filed an alternative to the draft prescriptions in an effort to water down the Department of Interior and Commerce’s final mandates. According to Hillman, “PacifiCorp’s trap and haul alternative was another attempt to duck their social responsibilities. I commend Secretaries Kempthorne and Guterrez for seeing through their charade.” Hillman concludes, “If Bill Fehrman still refuses to remove the dams, he will be guilty of gouging ratepayers to the benefit of Warren Buffett and other wealthy investors. He will also be complicit in the genocide of the Native People of the Klamath Basin.”

Capital improvement costs to power projects such as dams are often billed to ratepayers with a regulated rate of return for investors. “Even though the cost of ladders exceeds the cost of dam removal, PacifiCorp may attempt to bill ratepayers for the added cost and at the same time earn a rate of return for investors,” according to Craig Tucker, Ph.D., Relicensing Coordinator for the Karuk Tribe. The Public Utility Commissions of California and Oregon would have to approve such a move.

Historically, the Klamath River was one of the three most productive salmon rivers in America. Today, dams and diversions have decimated salmon populations leading to strict limits on commercial salmon fishing up and down the west coast in 2006. Tribes, fishermen, and environmentalists see dam removal as a fundamental step towards restoring the Klamath’s fishery.

Governors Schwarzenegger and Kulongoski plan to host a Dam Removal Summit in early March to discuss how the dam removal factors in a basin wide agreement to address the concerns of Tribes, fishermen, and irrigators.

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