



May 7, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subject: Siskiyou, Modoc and Klamath County Response to April 16, 2021 Joint Letter

Dear President Biden:

Siskiyou, Modoc and Klamath counties (counties) are writing this letter in response to the April 16, 2021, joint letter from the Karuk Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Klamath Tribes, et al. (attached as reference). Farmers and ranchers in the Klamath Project are experiencing one of the most devastating irrigation seasons since the Project's authorization in 1905, with less than 10% of needed irrigation supplies allocated by the Bureau of Reclamation through Upper Klamath Lake. These curtailments will have far reaching impacts to family farms and ranches, those employed through agricultural production, and those businesses that rely on active farming and ranching. In addition, the National Wildlife Refuges that lie within the boundaries of the Klamath Project will also suffer, impacting the entire Pacific Flyway.

Far too often in the Klamath Basin, all involved encounter a crisis, such as this water year, engage in triage, and say that we will take steps to prevent such a mess from arising again. Eventually, these crises calm and we revert to focusing on other priorities, leaving a void for long-term solutions. We recognize that concerted effort is needed to take long-term planning from the discussion phase, through planning an into implementation; and that these actions would be best met through a grass roots approach. Towards this end, our three counties have actively participated in efforts to foster collaboration and find consensus on projects aimed at increasing water availability and improving water quality. Each of our counties have contributed funding to facilitate this collaboration understating that the road ahead is not an easy one.

We have been participants in broadly-based efforts that include the signatories of the April 16, 2021 letter. Those efforts have produced consensus recommendations that we have been proud to support along with those groups, and funding has been directed to the projects we identified.

We have concerns over items outlined in the attached letter, and how they may derail collaborative efforts. While anyone has the right to recommend funding, alone or with other parties, it came as a surprise that such far-reaching proposals were not vetted through the processes where we have worked cooperatively with those same parties. In addition, the letter appears to use the current crisis as an opportunity to go well beyond mitigation of the severe impacts being experienced by communities in the basin. It is unclear what some of the measures are, or how they will be beneficial.

Of more specific concern, some of those asks for funding appear to be targeting permanent retirement of agricultural land and water. The signatories have not discussed those proposals with any of our three counties. We cannot support discussions and efforts that center around permanent retirement of family farms and ranches, and doing so would essentially eliminate the need for stakeholders to

coordinate in a collaborative manner. Family farming and ranching is an integral part of the Klamath Basin, including the Klamath Project and other essential farming communities throughout the watershed. Not only are these family operations a rich part of the basin's history, but they provide the foundation for our economies. Any funding from your administration should make the prosperity of both our agricultural and fisheries dependent communities a top priority, as opposed to extinguishing one to promote another.

We are also keenly concerned with funding requests to achieve full implementation of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) consistent with the determined timeframe. There are concerns that Siskiyou County continually submits through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process. In addition, after over a decade of assurances that the KHSA would not rely on federal funding, it appears that marketing point has been abandoned; this does not serve the public interest or inspire trust. Meanwhile, the three counties are wholly concerned with the unaddressed needs of the Klamath Project, including, but not limited to, those in section 1.9 of the Amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement and the need to avoid negative cost and regulatory consequences to Upper Basin agriculture that *will result from* dam removal unless those problems are addressed.

We believe that there is consensus to be found in certain other asks outlined in the letter, and recognizing that there are many arguments about the causes of depleted fisheries, we support all efforts to pursue financial assistance for these resource dependent communities for injury they may experience. We are open to further discussing funding for addressing the continued decline of sucker species and coho, so long as these efforts focus on those actions to assess and the actual limiting factors for their survival. For over 20 years, solutions have been focused on increasing lake levels and Iron Gate flows, in turn decreasing agricultural deliveries, while yielding no worthwhile benefits for listed species.

We fully understand that in the midst of this water year there is bound to be tension, fracturing and competition amongst stakeholders. We hope this letter serves to acknowledge our desire to continue to promote the need for collaboration and long-term solutions that provide a benefit for all involved, and that we are willing to work in any way we can to promote the success of all affected communities.

Sincerely,

Ray A. Haupt, Chair
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Brandon Criss, District 1
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Ed Valenzuela, District 2
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Michael N. Kobseff, District 3
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Nancy Ogren, District 4
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

Ned Coe, Chair
Modoc County Board of Supervisors

Patricia Cullins, District II
Modoc County Board of Supervisors

Elizabeth Cavasso, District IV
Modoc County Board of Supervisors

Geri Byrne, District V
Modoc County Board of Supervisors

Derrick DeGroot, Vice-Chair
Klamath County Commissioners

Donnie Boyd, Commissioner
Klamath County Commissioners

cc: Secretary Deb Haaland, Department of Interior
The Honorable Doug LaMalfa
The Honorable Cliff Bentz
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Alex Padilla
The Honorable Brian Dahle
The Honorable Megan Dahle
The Honorable E. Werner Reschke
The Honorable Dennis Linthicum
The Karuk Tribe
The Klamath Tribes
The Yurok Tribes
American Rivers
California Waterfowl
California Trout
Fly Fishers International, Northern California Council
Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Association
Sustainable Northwest
Trout Unlimited

April 16, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Another massive crisis is mounting in the Klamath Basin this year due to extraordinarily dry hydrologic conditions following several years of prolonged drought. The Basin has faced drought conditions almost every year this past decade, and 2021 is on track to becoming the worst water year in at least four decades.

The scope and scale of impact the drought will have on the already-strained people, economies, infrastructure, and wildlife of the Klamath Basin cannot be overstated. Federal disaster relief is required for both immediate relief that can serve as a down payment toward comprehensive long-term solutions, and move the Klamath Basin to more sustainable footing that supports Tribal people, family farms and commercial fishing, recovers endangered species, and restores the ecosystem. To mitigate the multiple crises facing us this year, we ask your urgent support for the following disaster relief resources:

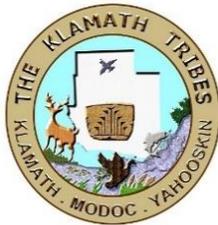
1. Commercial and Tribal subsistence fishery disaster relief through "Fisheries Failure" Disaster Declaration from the Secretary of Commerce, including \$150 million in fishery disaster subsistence assistance direct relief for devastated West Coast salmon fishing-dependent communities, and to the Karuk, Yurok, and Hoopa. These dollars in no way reflect the value or the loss of this fishery to the Karuk Tribe or any other Tribe.
2. Restoration funding to address the needs of the critically endangered C'waam (Lost River Sucker) and Koptu (shortnose sucker).
3. Targeted support for Klamath Basin farmers and ranchers, including tribal members who farm and ranch, who are all facing the loss of this entire growing season.
4. \$50 million to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in coordination and cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for permanent land and/or water acquisition for voluntary sellers to transfer instream flow - without harm to Tribal and private property.
5. A senior federal envoy to the Basin appointed by the White House with the authority and charge to seek long term, sustainable solutions for overcoming long term, unsustainable, basin-wide ecological degradations.

Additionally, the following water infrastructure needs represent just a few of the many pressing stabilizing measures necessary to provide essential support to the stressed and interconnected water system, and to help prevent future water crises:

1. \$50 million for floodplain and riparian restoration projects by Tribal Natural Resource departments.
2. Continued federal resources, investment, and participation to achieve full implementation of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSa) consistent with the determined timeframe.
3. Funds to bolster State and Tribal capacity to monitor and regulate groundwater depletions and water quality degradation.

The above resources are critical to respond to the current water emergency, as well as to provide a roadmap for long-term solutions to put the Klamath Basin on a sustainable path and end on-going and perpetual crisis management. We request your urgent attention to this matter and stand ready to provide local leadership and partnership to achieve these desired outcomes.

Sincerely,



THE YUROK TRIBE



Cc:

- Senator Ron Wyden
- Senator Jeff Merkley
- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Senator Alex Padilla
- Congressman Cliff Bentz
- Congressman Jared Huffman
- Congressman Doug LaMalfa
- Governor Kate Brown
- Governor Gavin Newsom
- Secretary Deb Haaland, Department of the Interior
- Secretary Gina Raimondo, Department of Commerce
- Secretary Tom Vilsack, Department of Agriculture