

PRESS RELEASE

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California Council, Flyfishers International • Friends of the Shasta River • Save California
Salmon • Mount Shasta Ecology Center • American Whitewater • International Rivers •
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations**

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***KLAMATH DAM REMOVAL PROCESS ENTERS HOME STRETCH
Environmental Review Confirms the Benefits of Dam Removal***

Washington, DC – Today the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) released its draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed removal of the lower four Klamath River dams. The public is now invited to comment on the DEIS which describes the impacts and benefits of the project.

“Once again, a thorough analysis by experts reveals dam removal as key for restoring Klamath fisheries and improving water quality” notes Yurok Vice Chairman Frankie Myers. “Our culture and our fisheries are hanging in the balance. We are ready to start work on dam removal this year.”

In comparing the impacts of dam removal to current conditions, the DEIS concludes that dam removal provides significant economic, environmental, and cultural benefits to northern California and southern Oregon. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of two other Environmental Impact Studies that evaluated dam removal over the past two decades.

For California and Oregon commercial salmon fishermen, dam removal is key to revitalizing their industry. “Dams have decimated salmon returns on the Klamath River which means fewer harvest opportunities for family-owned commercial fishing vessels. Dam removal has the potential to save our industry and thousands of jobs in California and Oregon ports,” explains Glen Spain with Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations.

In recent years, as many as 90 percent of juvenile salmon sampled tested positive for a disease called *Ceratomyxa shasta*. The disease flourishes in the areas where water quality and flows are most affected by the dams. “The dams are a key factor in the diseases that are wiping out entire generations of salmon,” says Spain.

Brian Johnson, California Director of Trout Unlimited, acknowledges that dam removal is but one significant component of the environmental restoration work that is needed throughout the Klamath Basin to support the recovery of fish like salmon and steelhead trout. “We still need to

balance water use and restore wetlands in the Upper Basin,” said Johnson. “But dam removal remains the single biggest thing we can do to restore Klamath fisheries and water quality right now.”

Benefits of dam removal include reintroducing salmon to over 400 miles of historical habitat, eliminating reservoirs that host toxic algae blooms each summer, and eliminating poor water quality conditions that allow fish disease-causing parasites to flourish. Because the cost of relicensing the dams would exceed the cost of removal under the plan, removal is also the best outcome for PacifiCorp customers.

“This is the biggest salmon restoration project in history,” notes Russell ‘Buster’ Attebery, Chairman of the Karuk Tribe. “And it’s desperately needed. Fewer and fewer salmon return each year. If we don’t act now, we may lose them all. Dam removal gives me hope that my grandchildren will be able to fish for the family dinner the way I did when I was a kid.”

“Dam removal works. We have only to look at the Elwha River restoration to see just how quickly an entire ecosystem can recover,” said Brian Graber, senior director of river restoration for American Rivers. “The Klamath is significant not only because it will be the biggest dam removal and river restoration effort in history, but also because it is a story of righting historic wrongs, illustrating how the futures of rivers and communities are inextricably linked.”

Some in the agricultural community see dam removal as a way to improve fish populations, making resolution of water disputes easier. “What it comes down to is what's good for fish is good for farms. Taking dams out will benefit fish, people and agriculture. Dam removal is a huge step towards bringing the Klamath Basin back into balance,” Kelley Delpit, third generation farmer in the Klamath Basin.

FERC will accept public comments on the DEIS until April 18, 2022. Before dam removal can commence, FERC will need to issue a final EIS and approval. Dam removal advocates hope FERC will issue a final approval this summer will dam removal activities to begin soon after.

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Editor’s note:

FERC dEIS can be found [here](#).

A table summarizing effects of dam removal to the no-action alternative can be found on page xlii (table ES-2) of the dEIS.

Links to more information:

Background on the grassroots movement behind dam removal at bringthesalmonhome.org.

Information on the coalition of groups supporting dam removal and Klamath restoration at [Reconnect Klamath](#).

Detailed information on dam removal plan at [Klamath River Renewal Corporation](#).