



State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

For Immediate Release

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December 27, 2018

California, Oregon Herald Significant Step toward Klamath River Restoration

*California's Draft Environmental Impact Report and Oregon's Final Water Quality Certification
Seen as Milestones*

Natural resources leaders in California and Oregon hailed today's release of a draft environmental impact report for a project to reopen hundreds of miles of historic habitat for salmonids along the Klamath River and its tributaries.

The report issued by California's State Water Resources Control Board marks a key step in a decade-long effort to remove four hydroelectric dams and restore the health of the Klamath River. The dam-removal project is part of a broader effort by California, Oregon, federal agencies, Klamath Basin tribes, water users and conservation organizations to revitalize the basin, advance recovery of fisheries, uphold trust responsibilities to the tribes, and sustain the region's farming and ranching heritage.

"Today's developments move us closer to the goal of removing the four dams and restoring natural and ecological function within the Klamath River watershed," California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird said. "This project is our best opportunity to heal the Klamath River and solve water quality and fisheries problems that have affected Klamath Basin communities for decades."

"The removal of the Klamath River dam complex is a significant step in ensuring our communities and future generations have access to the resources provided by a healthy Klamath River watershed," Oregon Water Quality Administrator Justin Green said. "I commend everyone who has contributed to advancing this ambitious project and look forward to continued coordination between Oregon and California."

The draft environmental impact report looks at potential impacts associated with the Lower Klamath Project, proposed by the non-profit Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) to decommission and remove three hydroelectric dams in California and one in Oregon to create a free-flowing Klamath River and restore access to historic habitat for fish. The project also will improve water quality and create a more natural temperature regime in the Klamath River.

KRRC has applied for a water quality certification from the State Water Resources Control Board for the project, which is a necessary step in securing approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The federal Clean Water Act requires states to certify that anything released into the nation's waters – including water releases from removal of a hydroelectric dam – complies with water quality standards.

The State Water Board released a draft water quality certification in June. Issuance of a final certification requires review under the California Environmental Quality Act. Since the project includes removal of dams in both California and Oregon, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality issued a final water quality certification for removal of the Oregon dam in September. KRRC's applications to transfer and surrender the dam licenses to proceed with dam removal are pending with FERC.

Comments on State Water Board's draft environmental impact report will be accepted through noon February 26. Details are available on the State Water Board's [Lower Klamath Project page](#).

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