

P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Karuk Tribe • Klamath Tribes of Oregon • Yurok Tribe
Trout Unlimited • Institute for Fisheries Resources • California Trout
Klamath Riverkeeper • Salmon River Restoration Council
Northern California Council of the Federation of Flyfishers
Upper Klamath Water Users' Association
American Rivers • Klamath Water Users' Association
Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday November 10, 2011

Media Contacts:

Craig Tucker, *Karuk Tribe*: 916-207-8294
Steve Rothert, *AR*: 530-277-0448
Glen Spain, *PCFFA*: 541-689-2000
Greg Addington, *KWUA*, 541-883-6100
Brian Johnson, *Trout Unlimited*, 510-528-4772

Jeff Mitchell, *Klamath Tribes*: 541-891-5971
Curtis Knight, *Cal Trout*, 530-859-1872
Petey Brucker, *SRRC*, 530-598-4229
Mark Rockwell, *NCCFF*, 530 559-5759

PROPOSED KLAMATH LEGISLATION SUPPORTS RURAL ECONOMIES

-Klamath Economic Restoration Act Creates Economic Security for Agricultural, Tribal, and Fishing Communities

-Act's bi-partisan solutions deserve Congressional support; risks of doing nothing are extreme

Washington, DC – A Klamath Economic Restoration Act introduced today in the US Senate by Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley and in the House by California Congressman Mike Thompson deserves prompt Congressional action, said a growing group of bi-partisan supporters. A growing and diverse coalition representing tens of thousands of people including, ranchers, fishermen, Tribes, business owners, and conservationists say the Act's collaborative solutions will end the ongoing water crises hurting Klamath communities that still have double digit unemployment figures (see partial list of Agreement supporters below).

Klamath Economic Recovery Act supporters stress that many livelihoods are at stake and now is the time to settle long-standing water rights disputes and avoiding catastrophes such as the 2001 water shut-off, 2002 fish kill, and the 2006 commercial salmon fishing closure.

“When disaster hit and litigation got drawn out, we were challenged by elected officials to develop our own solutions to the water crises that have devastated our communities,”

said Steve Kandra, Klamath Basin farmer. “Together we did it and we’re part of a strong and growing constituency that expects our elected officials to seize this opportunity to end the Klamath Crisis.”

The legislation’s bi-partisan recommendations are based on the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and Klamath Hydroelectric Agreements, companion documents that were developed by farming, fishing, tribal and environmental groups with support from both the Bush and Obama administrations as well as Governors Brown, Schwarzenegger, Kitzhaber, and Kulongoski. Jeff Mitchell, lead negotiator for the Klamath Tribes noted, “This bill is a marked departure from past attempts by one interest group to strong arm one another. Instead we’ve set aside ideological debates and focused on protecting everyone’s interests collectively. It’s exactly the type of win-win policy Congress should embrace.”

The legislation authorizes the Administration to carry out economic development and restoration activities laid out in the Klamath Settlement Agreements. It also provides the Secretary of the Interior with the authority to determine whether four aging dams should be removed. The Agreements are designed to provide security to commercial fishing and agricultural economies that when healthy are worth more than \$750 million a year to the region, and employ thousands of people in rural areas suffering from high unemployment.

“This Congress has the opportunity to solve the Klamath Crisis. Failure to act will mean more lost jobs and a continuation of the economic insecurity that is destroying our rural communities,” said Becky Hyde, an Upper Basin rancher.

Reflecting on the challenges of working with Congress, Glen Spain, representing the commercial fishing industry emphasized: “Our rural communities simply can’t afford to do nothing. That’s a recipe for another round of catastrophes like the fish kill and irrigation shut-off. We desperately need Congress to act now.”

###

Editor’s Notes

Link to draft bill: http://www.klamathrestoration.org/images/stories/pdfs/11-8-11_Klamath_Legislation_Draft_END11921.pdf

For more on the most recent federal and state dam removal environmental analysis and federal and state decision-making process, see: www.klamathrestoration.gov

For a full list of supporting agencies, organizations and governments go to: <http://www.klamathrestoration.org/restoration-partners.html>

And

<http://www.KBRAequalsjobs.com>

All the four Klamath hydropower dams combined have generated only a very small amount of power – only about 82 Megawatts (MW) on average over the past fifty years. According to estimates by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the federal agency that licenses dams, after expensive retrofitting to meet modern standards, these dams would then only generate about 62 MW of power on average, or about 27% less than they do today. FERC itself estimated in its 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on relicensing that even if fully FERC relicensed, the required retrofitting would be so expensive that these dams would then operate at more than a \$20 million/year *net loss* (see FERC FEIS, Table 4-3 on pg. 4-2). The November 2007 FERC Final EIS is available online at:

http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/File_list.asp?document_id=13555784

It can also be found by a FERC docket search at www.ferc.gov through their eLibrary, Docket No. P-2082-027 posted November 16, 2007, Doc. No. 20071116-4001.