



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov

News Release

Salazar Praises Work of Klamath Agreements Parties

Notes Secretarial Determination Awaits Congressional Action

02/27/2012

Contact: Adam Fetcher (DOI) 202 208-6416

SAN FRANCISCO – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today thanked the many parties to the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) and the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA) for their continued support of the Agreements and their work with the Department as it completed numerous peer-reviewed scientific and technical studies and an environmental analysis during the past year to inform a pending Secretarial Determination on whether removal of four dams on the Klamath River is in the public interest and will advance the restoration of salmon and steelhead fisheries in the Klamath Basin.

Because Congress has not enacted legislation necessary to authorize a Secretarial Determination under the terms of the KHSA, there will not be a decision by March 31, 2012 on potential removal of the dams. In light of this, the Secretary's Chief of Staff Laura Davis, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor and Special Advisor to the Chief of Staff John Bezdek consulted with several of the parties to the Agreements on next steps.

"The Department of the Interior, working with our partners at NOAA and the U.S. Forest Service, has upheld our commitments in these agreements that are so important to strengthening the health and prosperity of those that depend on the Klamath River for their way of life," said Secretary Salazar. "I am proud of the work of our team of experts who have completed more than 50 new studies and reports that are providing significant new information on the potential effects of Klamath River dam removal as part of a transparent, science-based process."

Two years ago, Secretary Salazar, Under Secretary of Commerce Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Klamath Basin farmers, fishermen, conservation groups, American Indian tribes, the governors of Oregon and California, and the CEO of PacifiCorp – the owner of four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River – announced the completion of the KBRA and the KHSA. The signing of these documents marked the beginning of a period of analysis of potential dam removal and the need to work with Congress to authorize a Secretarial Determination. At the time of the signing, Secretary Salazar hailed the importance of this comprehensive, locally-driven solution to one of the nation's most bitter and longest running water disputes.

Under the terms of the KHSA, the Secretary agreed to use "best efforts" to make a decision by March 31, 2012; however, Congressional action is required to pass legislation authorizing the Secretary to make a Secretarial Determination, which will result in either the removal of the dams eight years from now, or require PacifiCorp to continue its application for a new hydropower license for the dams.

The KHSA stipulates that three key conditions must first be met before a Secretarial Determination can be made:

- The Interior Department must conduct additional studies in order to provide a clear and accurate description of the costs, benefits, and liabilities associated with dam removal (expected to be released in final form this spring);
- Oregon and California must identify a source for financing their share of the dam removal costs (Oregon has done so, and it is expected that California will confirm details of its share very soon); and
- Congress must authorize a Secretarial Determination (legislation was introduced last November, but there has been no further action).

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) was published late last year describing the potential environmental effects of dam removal and the KBRA. The Draft EIS/EIR evaluated several different alternatives including two options for leaving the dams in place. Scores of meetings and briefings with the public, stakeholders, tribes and local governments have been held throughout the Klamath Basin and beyond to gather input and seek feedback from the communities that will be most affected by the Secretarial Determination. More than 3,200 comments on the Draft EIS/EIR were received during the public comment process.

In addition, the studies released in September 2011 were peer-reviewed by independent experts and have been summarized into a single draft "overview report" that is currently undergoing an additional peer review.

"The reports tell us that removal of the dams has the potential to support thousands of additional jobs in the Klamath Basin, including new fishing and recreational opportunities, while providing increased water delivery certainty to Basin farmers and wildlife refuges and would increase the harvest opportunity for salmon and steelhead in the river," added Salazar. "We will continue our collaboration with states, tribes and local communities to finalize the scientific studies and environmental analysis, and we will continue to work with Congress on legislation that would authorize a decision to be made."

Although a Secretarial Determination will not be made by March 31, the final studies and environmental analysis will be released this spring.

###