

Submitter: Larry Phillips
On Behalf Of: American Sportfishing Association
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

May 3, 2023

Re: Funding request by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to monitor and evaluate salmon and steelhead in the Klamath River following the removal of four dams.

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of the American Sportfishing Association (ASA), we are writing to respectfully request that the Oregon Legislature provide agency requested funding to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to monitor and evaluate fish recolonization in the Klamath River and tributaries following the removal of four dams. Unfortunately, the ODFW 2023 Agency Budget Request for this work was not included in Governor Kotek's proposed budget.

The upstream migration of all anadromous fish species was blocked in 1912 by the construction of the Copco 1 Dam (river mile 201.9) in California. In the years following, three additional dams were constructed, with the most recent being the Iron Gate (river mile 193.9) in 1962. Historically, the upper basin supported abundant populations of Pacific Lamprey, Coho, and Steelhead as well as numerous resident fish species. Prior to the construction of the dams, the Klamath supported the third most abundant Chinook salmon runs on the West Coast.

The license, held by PacifiCorp, to operate the Klamath Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 2082), on the Klamath River in California and Oregon expired in 2006. The Project includes the four Klamath River mainstem hydroelectric dams (Iron Gate Dam, Copco 1, Copco 2, and J.C. Boyle Dam), and several other hydropower facilities. One condition of relicensing these dams required the volitional passage of anadromous fish. This requirement resulted in the consideration of other alternatives including removing the dams. In 2010, the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) between PacifiCorp and the United States initiated the removal of four dams on the Klamath River.

The ODFW lists numerous monitoring and evaluation activities in their 2023 funding request that are necessary to inform managers regarding adaptive management measures that may be needed to restore healthy fish populations. Except for spring Chinook, managers will rely solely on the natural recolonization of salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey to waters upstream of Iron Gate Dam. There is a significant

amount of uncertainty associated with this approach. These funds will be used to document fish abundance and passage through approximately 400 miles of newly accessible spawning and rearing habitat.

Failure to fund this work will result in a missed opportunity to document fish recolonization following the largest dam removal project in US history. This relatively small investment would also inform fisheries managers regarding other dam removal projects that are being discussed. Finally, failure to fund this work will have significant negative impacts on tribal, recreational, and commercial fishers who are already facing the possibility of a total closure in 2023 due to poor fall Chinook returns to the Sacramento and Klamath Rivers.

We respectfully request that the Oregon Legislature appropriate \$833,810 requested in the proposed policy option package (POP) 109 and \$302,934 requested in POP 119 to the ODFW.

Respectfully,

Larry Phillips
Pacific Fisheries Policy Director
American Sportfishing Association
Phone: 703-872-9857
Email: Lphillips@asafishing.org
www.asafishing.org | www.KeepAmericaFishing.org