

KLAMATH TRIBES OF OREGON PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- May 23, 2014



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Klamath Tribal Council is pleased that Senate Bill 2379 is now moving forward regarding the KBRA, KHSA, and UKBCA

Chiloquin, OR- The Klamath Tribal Council has reviewed Senate Bill 2379, the *Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2014*, and is pleased to note that it is faithful to the bargained-for benefits negotiated by parties throughout the Basin. The Act, which will effectuate the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement (KBRA), the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA) and the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement (UKBCA), was introduced by Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, along with California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. Feinstein and Boxer represent tribes and other KBRA and KHSA parties in the lower Klamath Basin.

Tribal Chairman Don Gentry said, “Senator Wyden’s introduction of the legislation is another positive step in the Klamath Tribes’ long struggle to secure a better future for the Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin Paiute people.” Gentry further explained, “The Agreements not only address key issues affecting the restoration and sustainability of our fisheries and other Treaty resources, they provide economic balance and opportunity to our Tribal members in the near-term while the massive river restoration and salmon and steelhead recovery programs are being implemented. Through the exercise of our sovereignty and the strength of our Treaty Rights, we have been able to negotiate agreements that will help achieve the long established goals of our people to protect and enhance our Treaty resources and restore our homeland.”

According to Vice-Chair Vivian Kimbol, “The Klamath Tribes will be paying close attention as this legislation moves forward. You might say we are cautiously optimistic. We expect that Congress will respect the hard-fought negotiations and the agreements we’ve reached, but our history shows that we can never take that for granted. We will be monitoring the legislative process to make sure that the Klamath Tribes’ bargained-for benefits remain intact.” Kimbol’s statement reflects a motion that was passed overwhelmingly by the Klamath Tribes General Council on November 16, 2013, and subsequently incorporated into the UKBCA and the legislation. As directed by Klamath Tribes General Council, one condition critical to the UKBCA becoming final is that the Klamath Tribes must review the final legislation and notify the Secretary of Interior that the legislation is “materially consistent” with the UKBCA.

Through its referendum process, the Klamath Tribes have voted to support the Agreements on three different occasions. The first vote, for the KBRA and KHSA, took

place in 2010, and was overwhelmingly supportive. A second vote, taken in 2012, addressed amendments to the KBRA and was also overwhelmingly supportive. Last month the Tribes had a referendum vote on the UKBCA (Section 16 of the KBRA). Approximately 57% of those who voted chose to support the Agreement. David Gover, a Senior Staff attorney with the Native American Rights Fund, observed, “Water settlements are always tough but the Klamath agreements, as a whole, provide the best pathway forward to protect the Tribes’ treaty resources, restore the tribal fisheries and improve the tribal economy.”

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