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OR Power Rate Bill Passes as KRK Calls For Stronger Dam Removal Agreement

Senate Bill 76 passed the Oregon Senate today, marking the first official allocation of funds to support the removal of four dams on the Klamath River.

"This is the first step in getting Klamath fisheries a real shot at recovery, provided we can make key improvements in the dam removal deal," said Klamath Riverkeeper Erica Terence.

Oregon legislation SB76 caps the costs PacifiCorp can force its ratepayers to absorb while securing needed funds for dam removal—an action slated for 2020 in the agreement in principle to remove Klamath dams made public in November. According to economic studies by the California Energy Commission and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the cheapest route for ratepayers is dam removal, since federally-mandated fish ladders and needed water quality improvements could cost hundreds of millions more.

Though KRK supports these efforts to fund dam removal as the most prudent path, the nonprofit continues to seek changes in the final dam removal agreement due out in June. Erica Terence and a host of Klamath advocates appeared at a California State Water Resources Board meeting today, asking the agency to re-implement clean water processes on the dams if the AIP is not appropriately modified.

Specifically, KRK is calling on negotiators to strengthen water quality safeguards, limit immunity for PacifiCorp, and find funding for the world's biggest dam removal project independent of other ecologically damaging projects such as new dams or diversions from rivers elsewhere in California.

"Clean water is our bottom line, and it's time to change the deal so that toxic algae and other water quality violations are rightly regulated until the dams come down in 2020," added Terence. KRK has mounted several successful lawsuits challenging PacifiCorp's water quality violations over the last two years.

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