



February 21, 2019

Ms. Michelle Siebal
State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights – Water Quality Certification Program
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

Via Email: WR401Program@waterboards.ca.gov

RE: Lower Klamath Project – Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Dear Ms. Siebal:

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) and the League of Women Voters of Humboldt County, California (LWVHC) strongly support the removal of four dams on the Klamath River. The removal of the four dams will effectively improve water quality for humans, fish, and other wildlife and comply with the Clean Water Act water quality objectives. The improved water quality will also provide for the cultural and economic interests of Native Americans, recreational anglers, and the commercial fishing fleet of northern California.

This support of the proposed project of the Draft EIR is founded on the LWVC's and LWVHC's positions on natural resources, specifically water. The LWVC's position:

- protect the natural environment in areas of both water origin and water use
- reserve stream flows for protection of fish and wildlife habitat and other in-stream uses
- encourage off-stream storage; discourage additional on-stream dams
- provide for assessment of economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of water projects

The LVCHC's position: coordinated interagency planning and action are critical to successful management and to the accomplishment of the following objectives:

- rivers and streams should be left in their natural states whenever possible, with each case considered on its own merits.
- total watershed management, including preservation and restoration should be coordinated by qualified professionals so the economic interests, aesthetic issues, and health concerns can exist in harmony in our county and our future water supply can be provided adequately.

The State Water Resources Control Board has identified the following Proposed Project objectives, as required under CEQA Guidelines, section 15124, subdivision (b):

In a timely manner:

1. Improve the long-term water quality conditions associated with the Lower Klamath Project in the California reaches of the Klamath River, including water quality impairments due to *Microcystis aeruginosa* and associated toxins, water temperature, and levels of biostimulatory nutrients.
2. Advance the long-term restoration of the natural fish populations in the Klamath Basin, with particular emphasis on restoring the salmonid fisheries used for subsistence, commerce, tribal cultural purposes, and recreation.
3. Restore volitional anadromous fish passage in the Klamath Basin to viable habitat currently made inaccessible by the Lower Klamath Project dams.
4. Ameliorate conditions underlying high disease rates among Klamath River salmonids. The objectives further the underlying purpose of the Proposed Project (removal of four dams), which is the timely improvement of water quality related to the Lower Klamath Project within and downstream of the current Hydroelectric Reach and the restoration of anadromous access upstream of Iron Gate Dam (the current barrier to anadromy).

These objectives align with the League's positions, and we are pleased to support the Water Board's Draft EIR.

Sincerely,



Helen Hutchison
President, LWVC



Rollin Richmond
President, LWVHC