



Board of Supervisors, Resighini voice dam concerns

Written by [Adam Spencer](#), [The Triplicate](#) November 14, 2011 01:16 pm

Del Norte County shares the Resighini Rancheria's concerns about the proposed process for removing four dams on the Klamath River, supervisors said this week.

On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors voted to craft a letter with the rancheria voicing both parties' objections to a recent environmental impact report analyzing the project.

Supervisors and Resighini officials said they favor dam removal but not through the current process. The rancheria's main objection is to the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, which is supposed to restore the Klamath basin while retaining jobs.

"The (KBRA) is like feeding our people poison with a side of dam removal," said Sunshine Watkins, treasurer of the business council of Resighini Rancheria. "It terminates native rights of the river, does not secure enough water flow for salmon, does not cure water pollution problems and does not restore enough marshes and lakes in the Upper Klamath Basin to restore sucker fish."

Supervisor David Finigan said the board made the right decision last year by not signing the agreement that executes the removal, the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement (KHSA), and the accompanying KBRA.

Resighini's presentation to the board included information from Patrick Higgins, a fisheries consultant to the rancheria.

Higgins exhibited the environmental impact report in question, a foot-thick stack of documents — almost 3,000 pages.

"This is 1,880 pages and then a thousand pages in appendices and it's very, very flawed," Higgins said.

The report in question only addresses the impacts of the KHSA, Higgins said. Since the KHSA and KBRA are linked, the reports are piecemealing, which is illegal under the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act, Higgins argued.

On Thursday, U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson, who represents Del Norte, introduced legislation in Congress that would fund the KHSA and KBRA to the tune of \$800 million dollars.

County supervisors and the Resighini officials said they preferred dam removal be accomplished through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's relicensing process.

In 2006, the National Marine Fisheries Service said that relicensing was conditional on dam removal or fish ladders, which would cost at least \$250 million. PacifiCorp challenged this requirement and lost. The Resighini believe that PacifiCorp would favor decommissioning of the dams if it was forced to put in the ladders, because of the ladders' cost and the fact that they would cut power production in half.

Dam removal through the KHSA would not begin until 2020. Supervisors and Resighini officials expressed belief that the dams could be removed quicker through the FERC process.

Public comment on the report can be given until Nov. 21 at klamathrestoration.org.

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