

State of California, County of Siskiyou

Board of Supervisors Minutes, February 13, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County, California, met in special session this 13th day of February 2024; there being present Supervisors Brandon Criss, Ed Valenzuela, Michael N. Kobseff, Nancy Ogren and Ray A. Haupt, County Administrator Angela Davis, County Counsel Natalie E. Reed and County Clerk and ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Laura Bynum by Deputy County Clerk Wendy Winningham.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kobseff. Pursuant to AB23, the Clerk announced that the Board members receive no additional compensation for sitting as members of the BOS only. Copco Lake Fire Protection District Fire Chief Francis Gill led in the salute to the flag of the United States of America.

Presentations from the Public

Chair Kobseff provided a brief overview of the special meeting and invited comments from members of the public that were present for the meeting.

Community member William Briggs shared concerns regarding the potential negative impacts associated with opening of the Copco dam and release of stored water.

Klamath River Country Estates (KRCE) representative Ann Noel presented and summarized a one-page letter regarding the ongoing efforts to work with the Klamath Mitigation Fund (KMF) and Klamath River Restoration Corporation (KRRC) to mitigate current and potential future damage to KRCE property with upcoming removal of the Copco and Iron Gate dams. Ms. Noel voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts associated with the silt released down the Klamath River.

Montague resident Brendan Bowling voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts to local fishing industry and possible inability to access the River.

Hornbrook resident William Simpson voiced concerns regarding the possible high levels of various heavy metals, including Chromium, in the River water following the opening of the dams and release of water and potential for continued leaching of those minerals sediment left behind.

County resident Holly Hansard offered those present to provide statements related to their experiences following the release of water from behind the dams and shared concerns regarding the potential for additional dam removals elsewhere.

Copco Lake resident Linda Ebert voiced concerns regarding the condition of the landscape left behind for Copco Lake property owners and the need for increased restoration efforts.

Hornbrook resident Bett Peterson voiced concerns regarding the impacts associated with the toxic waste being sent down the River following the opening of the dams.

Scott Valley resident Ric Costales presented and summarized a one-page letter, voicing concerns regarding the potential negative impacts from the toxic elements being released in the River from the opening of the dams to ocean salmon and to those fish returning to the Scott and Shasta Rivers.

Hornbrook resident Toni Holley voiced concerns regarding the possible high levels of various heavy metals, including Chromium, in the River and potential for her groundwater well to go dry. Ms. Holley further shared concerns that action taken by the KRRC could be done without Congressional approval.

Copco Lake resident Chrissie Reynolds voiced concerns regarding the potential toxic sediments flowing down the River and harmful dust once the muddy sediment dries out.

Hornbrook resident Brian Engen voiced concerns regarding the potential negative impacts of the water releases to the KRCE and R-Ranch campgrounds located on the Klamath River.

Congressman Doug LaMalfa's representative Erin Ryan voiced concerns regarding the dam removal and water release situation and the associated Statewide impacts.

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Presentations from the Public – (continued)

Copco Lake resident Greg Jeter voiced concerns regarding the mitigation measures taken to bring water to those impacted by dry groundwater wells (temporary or permanent measures?), the need for test kits for wells to be provided to those affected and the lack of information concerns the project being provided to the local residents.

Copco Lake resident Geneve Spannaus Harder voiced concerns regarding the dam removal project, advising that over 80% of voters in the County voted to keep the dams in place.

Horse Creek resident Amanda Rainey voiced concerns regarding the potential for the toxic elements going down the Klamath to negatively impact local cattle ranchers and the negative environmental impacts also.

Copco Lake resident Barbara Austin voiced concerns regarding the restoration/seeding efforts and the negative impacts to the availability of water for firefighting with the draining of the reservoirs.

Scott Valley resident Susan Marshall voiced concerns that the dam removal agreement was signed on sovereign soil, not United States soil.

Yreka resident Chris Chandler voiced concerns regarding the potential increased level of heavy metals in the Klamath River following the opening of the dams and release of water.

Copco Lake resident Rick Dowdy shared concerns regarding the negative impacts of the water release and spoke in support of the County utilizing a Constitutional Sheriff in this situation.

Klamath River resident Debbie Kulpa voiced concerns regarding the fish being lost to the water going down the Klamath River following the opening of the dams.

Montague resident Sheila Meamber voiced concerns regarding the negative environmental impacts associated with the opening of the dams and water release.

Scott Valley resident Theo Johnson voiced concerns regarding the need for the KRRC and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to be transparent with regard to monitoring and reporting on water quality and the impacts to the aquatic life in the Klamath River system.

Montague resident Colleen Marino voiced concerns regarding the groundwater well at her Copco Lake cabin that went dry following the opening of the dams and water releases and potential noise impacts associated with the dam removal project activities.

Copco Lake resident Linda Oliver voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts to local firefighting with the water releases and the need for the Federal government to be accountable for their actions.

Former local resident Dorothy Dana voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts to local recreation and to those living along the reservoirs following the opening of the dams and the water releases.

Montague resident Eugenia Dias voiced concerns regarding the process for removing docks along Copco reservoir and recent deaths of birds and animals in the mud following opening of the dams and water releases.

Copco Lake resident Gib Anderson voiced concerns regarding the minimal compensation being offered to residents along the reservoirs and potential for his groundwater well to go dry.

County Presentations - County Administration - Discussion and possible direction regarding concerns expressed by the community related to the impacts of dam removal, including but not limited to: impacts to local wells, loss of wildlife, impacts to roads, traffic and communication regarding the Lower Klamath Dam Removal Project. Ms. Nielsen provided the County's Klamath Dam Removal Project website address and various contact information. Presentation and discussion only.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, providing a brief overview of the nature of the special meeting and advising that the Chair would read a comment into the record.

Chair Kobseff read a comment letter from the Yurok Tribe regarding the Tribe's contracting with Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES) for revegetation of the areas formerly under the Iron Gate and Copco reservoirs.

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County Presentations - County Administration – (continued)

In response to Chair Kobseff, Ms. Nielsen advised that issues like fire suppression, dock removal, future fishing and water quality monitoring would be addressed by others on the agenda and that County staff would follow up regarding issues brought forward during public comment and those agenda items.

Public Presentations - CKM Environmental - Discussion and possible direction re presentation of an update regarding the Lower Klamath Dam Decommissioning Project, including current/upcoming activities, use of roads and bridges by contractors, County permitting, coordination with the Klamath River Renewal Corporation and communication with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Presentation and discussion only.

CKM Environmental representative Chelsea Murphy appeared before the Board, summarizing various questions and concerns from members of the Board at the previous special Klamath Dam meeting, including public safety issues, the USGS gauge in the Klamath River (currently online), acorns being used for revegetation that have been foraged from areas not known for Sudden Oak Death and a request for the Board to review monitoring reports before being sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Ms. Murphy continued following up regarding questions and concerns, including a notification process with regard to fencing around restoration areas, nighttime construction at Iron Gate that has finished (lights will be turned off), notification process for any blasting that could occur, completion of road repair at Mile Marker 13 (along Copco rim) and communications with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regarding efforts to patrol for stranded wildlife. Ms. Murphy advised of plans to continue coordination efforts with the Klamath River Restoration Corporation (KRRC) and CDFW and Public Works' efforts to develop a global transportation permit (related to construction traffic).

Supervisor Haupt shared concerns regarding the foraging of acorns from the Rogue River and requested a map indicating locations of the collection efforts.

In response to Supervisor Kobseff regarding water quality monitoring and dry groundwater wells, Ms. Murphy advised that Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES) would monitor water quality and create reports, with aluminum being the only heavy metal being tested for, the County's Environmental Health Division monitoring for additional elements and the need to follow up for additional information regarding the mitigation measures in place the groundwater wells that have gone dry.

Copco Lake resident Chrissie Reynolds voiced concerns regarding the potential for additional groundwater wells to go dry in the future.

In response to members of the public, Ms. Murphy summarized various acronyms that would be in use during the special meeting.

Public Presentations - Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) - Discussion and possible direction to County staff re an update regarding the Klamath Project and legislation being sought to support actions identified in the 2016 Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement. KWUA Executive Director emailed a statement to be read into the record.

Klamath Water Users Association (KWUA) Executive Director and Counsel Paul Simmons attempted to connect via ZOOM but was unable to.

Following the lunch break, Chair Kobseff advised that the Clerk's Office received two pieces of correspondence from Rebecca Davis regarding the dam removal project.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen read a two-page email from Mr. Simmons regarding the potential financial and regulatory impacts associated with Klamath River dam removal to the irrigation water users operating upstream and using water diverted from Upper Klamath Lake and the Upper Klamath River. In addition, the KWUA has been working with Congressional representatives to address those negative impacts.

Public Presentations - Klamath River Renewal Corporation - Presentation of an update re Klamath Dam removal activities, coordination with the public and the County, and activities related to river conditions, residential well activities and wildlife issues. Presentation and discussion only.

Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRRC) Chief Executive Officer Mark Bransom appeared before the Board and provided a brief overview of the KRRRC, the non-profit organization tasked with removal of the hydroelectric project facilities (dams), including obtaining various permits, taking ownership of the facilities, decommissioning the facilities and restoring the land behind the dams. Mr. Bransom introduced KRRRC Public Information Officer (PIO) Ren Brownell.

Ms. Brownell appeared before the Board and presented a 28-page powerpoint presentation, including an overview of the anticipated process for removing four dams on the Upper Klamath River and summarized the reasons for removal. Ms. Brownell advised that planning and preparation information related to the dam removal project was available on the KRRRC's website.

Mr. Bransom continued the powerpoint, including an overview of the sediment that had accumulated behind the dams for approximately 100 years with much of it going down the Klamath River following the opening of the dams and release of water. Mr. Bransom advised that the approximately 5-7 million cubic yards of sediment was expected to travel down the Klamath River which was the same amount the River would have moved in one-year's time (versus flowing down the River in hours/days). Mr. Bransom further advised that sediment studies that were completed prior to the Project being issued Federal and/or State permits determined the sediment (dead algae, fine silts, sand and gravels) to be non-toxic and not exceeding human health standards with the expected dilution.

Continuing the powerpoint, Ms. Brownell and Mr. Bransom summarized before and after drawdown photos of Iron Gate and Copco and provided an overview of the drawdown strategy at Copco Reservoir, including the use of 'banked water' released from behind Keno Dam to manage the drawdown rate in order to protect public safety.

Mr. Bransom advised that homes in the area would be monitored for slope stability and summarized the road repair that was done at Mile Marker 13 (due to the sloughing of the slope after drawdown). Mr. Bransom further summarized the efforts being made to address two groundwater wells that have gone dry, ongoing monitoring of other local wells and efforts to determine short- and long-term solutions. Mr. Bransom advised that the co-licensees would put in place long-term solutions for those groundwater wells that have been impacted by the project activities. Mr. Bransom provided an overview of the Sediment Deposit Remediation Plan, advising that sediment downstream would be monitored, and possibly remediated for the next five years. Mr. Bransom briefly summarized the water quality and sediment testing that would be done on a monthly basis with reports sent to regulators.

Ms. Brownell continued the powerpoint, advising that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expected the water quality to not adversely impact human health and summarized the current and anticipated restoration/revegetation activities (hand seeding and helicopter broadcasting) that would be conducted by Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC (RES) on the land behind the dams following release of the water. Ms. Brownell additionally summarized the plans associated with fencing to minimize wildlife and livestock impacts and summarized the restoration portion of the drawdown and dam removal timeline.

Hornbrook resident William Simpson appeared before the Board, sharing concerns regarding the possible high levels of various heavy metals, including Chromium, in the Klamath River water following the opening of the dams and release of water and potential for continued leaching of those minerals sediment left behind.

Local resident Spring Anderson appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the potential for homes to be impacted by slope instability, the local wells that have gone dry and the need for heavy metal testing of the water.

Scott Valley resident Theo Johnson appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding unknowns related to water quality information provided in press releases regarding the dam removal project.

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Public Presentations - Klamath River Renewal Corporation – (continued)

Local resident Rex Cozzalio appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the lack of PacifiCorp and the KRRC's consideration of multiple-year scientific data that was provided prior to the decision to decommission and remove the dams and concerns regarding the potential negative impacts of removing the dams on water for agriculture.

Scott Valley resident Ric Costales appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the potential negative impacts should high levels of Hexavalent Chromium be found in the Klamath River.

Hornbrook resident Toni Holley appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the lack of property owner notification from KRRC concerning the groundwater wells and potential negative impacts to area campgrounds with removal of the dams and release of reservoir water.

Local resident Chrystal Maxwell appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the groundwater wells that have gone dry, various traffic/parking hazards around Copco due to the revegetation efforts and drones that have been flying over the area day and night.

Copco Lake resident Chrissie Reynolds appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the ongoing stress for area residents due to the water releases and wildlife stuck in the sediment/mud.

In response to Supervisor Criss regarding efforts to keep residents 'whole' with regard to groundwater wells that have gone or will go dry, Mr. Bransom advised that, as he stated earlier in his presentation, the co-licensees would put in place long-term solutions for those impacted groundwater wells.

Lengthy discussion followed between members of the Board and Mr. Bransom regarding KRRC's water quality testing process, efforts being made to address the dry groundwater well issue, community concerns regarding traffic and parking issues, KRRC's plans concerning removal of residents' docks, the presumed reason for fish 'die off' from a reduction in dissolved oxygen in the Klamath River following the drawdown and release of water, the timing of the water release/drawdown based on studies of the best time to minimize impacts to the native salmonids, KRRC's limitation with regard to no jurisdiction in Klamath River tributaries (for restoration of fish in those waterways), KRRC's temporary irrigation water rights to be used during the revegetation efforts, the need to follow up with regard to drones being used by RES during revegetation activities, the use of drones for inspection of structural engineering, the need to follow up with regard to possible heavy metal contamination in the Klamath River, KRRC's donation to Hornbrook Fire to assist with non-wildlife rescues, no provision for reimbursement to local fire departments for their wildlife rescue efforts, the 'wildlife friendly' temporary fencing installed, the definition of 'banked water' to be available for certain uses and KRRC's efforts to work with the Klamath River Country Estates (KRCE) with regard to possible mitigation needs.

Supervisor Haupt voiced concerns regarding the potential damages from sediment downriver and the lengthy time before the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will consider updating the flood plain down the Klamath River.

Additional discussion followed, including Ms. Brownell, regarding the KRRC's letters to FEMA regarding the flood plain mapping, KRRC's 15-mile limit of responsibility from Iron Gate down the Klamath, the anticipated timeframe related to initial revegetation efforts and maintenance/monitoring, the availability of revegetation/planting plans on the KRRC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) websites, the various fire suppression resources KRRC provided to the local area, the drones used by the Yurok Tribe to examine the underground geology and the need for private property owners' permission to access certain areas of the former reservoir in need of revegetation.

Supervisor Kobseff spoke in support of a possible demonstration to area residents of the anticipated fire suppression 'dipping method'.

Public Presentations - California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Presentation of an update re the Lower Klamath Dams Decommissioning Project, including Parcel B Lands, fish hatchery, assurances for Shasta and Scott water users, and wildlife and fisheries mortality resulting from dam removal. Presentation and discussion only.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) representative Mike Harris appeared before the Board and provided an update regarding the efforts being made to deter wildlife from getting stuck in the reservoir mud, the ongoing monitoring taking place in the area and the population losses of the non-native fish species that were in the reservoirs. Mr. Harris advised that the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRRC) would retain the Parcel B lands (behind the dams) for the time being with transfer of those lands to the State or other entities to be decided at a later date. Additionally, Mr. Harris advised that the water quality would be monitored with samples to be taken regularly and that the turbidity in the Klamath River would continue to decrease over time.

Copco Lake resident Chrissie Reynolds appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding the potential transfer of Parcel B lands to the State, suggesting that the land be offered to Copco residents that have lost access to the water. In addition, Mr. Reynolds shared concerns regarding the potential for public trespass and possible vandalism on residents' property.

Hornbrook resident William Simpson appeared before the Board and voiced concerns the possible high levels of various heavy metals, including Chromium, in the sediment left behind following water releases, possible negative impacts associated with livestock attempting to access the water left in the reservoirs and the need for alternative water sources for deer and livestock.

Siskiyou County Water Users Association (SCWUA) President Richard Marshall appeared before the Board and voiced concerns that the science does not support removal of the dams as a way to benefit salmon fisheries.

Supervisor Haupt voiced concerns regarding the potential regional collapse of the salmon fisheries following the opening of the dams and release of water downstream.

Lengthy discussion followed between members of the Board and Mr. Harris regarding the CDFW's efforts to develop a mitigation plan for wild and hatchery fish, the need to consider other fish species (i.e. sturgeon) in those plans, the need to develop alternatives should the first plan fail, anticipated release of fish from the hatchery later in 2024, a possible 10-12 year timeframe to see full recovery of the fisheries, the need for follow-up on the impacts of the dam removal project on ocean/marine fisheries, the CDFW response to recent events of deer/wildlife stuck in the sediment and the need for follow-up regarding the Parcel B lands and access to the property at a later date.

Further discussion followed regarding the need for additional discussion regarding fuel break management around the area, CDFW's anticipated losses of adult fish due to the drawdown/release of water behind the dams, information regarding water sampling that is provided by an outside resource group and the ongoing discussions with regard to future plans for the fisheries maintenance.

Local resident Crystal Maxwell appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding the losses of deer in the sediment left after the drawdown/release of water from behind the dams.

Local resident Danny Fontaine suggested that the Parcel B lands (once ownership is determined) contain a clause to restrict/not allow public access to them.

Mr. Harris advised that the dam removal project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) indicated that there would be an increase in deer wintering range with removal of the dams and reservoirs.

County Presentations - Office of Emergency Services/Sheriff/CalFire/Copco Lake Fire Department - Discussion and possible direction re emergency response as it relates to Klamath Dam Removal, including emergency response plans, road and traffic safety, public safety, and fire response measures following removal of the Copco and Iron Gate reservoirs. Presentation and discussion only.

Office of Emergency Services Director Bryan Schenone appeared before the Board.

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County Presentations - Office of Emergency Services/Sheriff/CalFire/Copco Lake Fire Department –
(continued)

Mr. Schenone provided an update regarding the ongoing efforts to create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the area, including evacuation protocols and the process for identifying areas of potential hazards (i.e. flooding, etc.).

Sheriff Jeremiah LaRue appeared before the Board and provided an update regarding the efforts being made to improve communication between law enforcement, the Klamath River Restoration Corporation (KRRC) and their contractors and the public in order to address public safety issues/incidents quickly and efficiently.

Bogus Elementary School Principal Erika Salvestro appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding dangerous situations that have occurred involving heavy-load construction truck traffic and the school's buses.

Sheriff LaRue advised that he would contact California Highway Patrol (CHP) in order to address the issue.

Copco Lake Fire Protection District Fire Chief Francis Gill appeared before the Board, advising that there were many vehicles in the area, including tree trimming vehicles and construction traffic that could negatively impact driving in/around Copco. Chief Gill additionally advised the public to not enter/trespass in the areas left behind after release of water from behind the dams, sharing concerns regarding the potential for dangerous and life-threatening incidents. Chief Gill requested the County's assistance with regard to potential removal of a medivac helicopter landing/launch location at Mallard Cove, slated for removal during restoration efforts on Parcel B lands.

CalFire Unit Chief and County Fire Warden Greg Roath appeared before the Board, providing an overview of the efforts made to engage with KRRC and develop a plan for fire mitigation with the loss of lake/reservoir water. Chief Roath additionally summarized firefighting apparatus/equipment (i.e. dip tanks, pumps, fire hose, etc.) placed in various locations to assist with fighting fires, cameras that could detect fires in the area, trainings being done related to water/mud rescue and anticipated use of a helicopter to dip from the River or tanks during the 2024 fire season.

Discussion followed between members of the Board, Chief Roath and Chief Gill regarding anticipated efforts work with KRRC to identify access points to utilize water for firefighting efforts, the fire hydrants located in/around Copco that are not affected by the reservoir drawdown, the anticipated process for siting water tanks in the area and the anticipated process for replenishing/filling those as needed.

Chief Gill shared concerns regarding the potential for impacts to local homes should the aging hydrant system fail.

In response to Supervisor Haupt, Chief Gill advised that the decision was made not to locate dry hydrants at two proposed sites due to unknowns related to the availability of a sufficient water source.

County resident Holly Hansard appeared before the Board, voicing concerns that removal/loss of the dams is endangering local communities.

County Presentations - Public Works - County Road Commissioner - Discussion and possible direction re
an update on Copco Road and public safety during the 2024 activities related to the Lower Klamath Dams
Decommissioning. Presentation and discussion only.

Public Works Director Tom Deany appeared before the Board and presented a powerpoint presentation on the condition of various roads in the Copco Lake area, including pictures of the damage done by heavy haul truck traffic, and an overview of the efforts being made by the Road Department to continue repairing those roads as need be. Mr. Deany voiced concerns that the work would impact other County roads and the Department's staffing. Mr. Deany requested that the Klamath River Restoration Corporation (KRRC) representatives express to their contractors to slow down to reduce the heavy load road damage.

Local resident Crystal Maxwell appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the condition of the roads in the Copco area due to the construction traffic and the long time span for law enforcement help to arrive.

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County Presentations - Public Works - County Road Commissioner – (continued)

County resident Don Meamber voiced concerns regarding large, heavy truck loads driving on Ager Road versus driving on Interstate 5 to access the construction/project area.

In response, Mr. Deany advised that large truck traffic on Ager or Ager Beswick Roads were there by accident and that the KRRC and their contractor Kiewit provided maps to their drivers, although not all drivers have complied or followed the maps.

County Presentations - Community Development - Environmental Health Division - Discussion and possible direction re an update on Klamath River conditions, impacts to groundwater wells resulting from dam removal activities and recent Community Development and Environmental Health efforts to collect data related to these issues. Presentation and discussion only.

Community Development Director Rick Dean appeared before the Board and provided a brief overview of the request.

Mr. Dean submitted an 18-page packet including two powerpoint presentations (a powerpoint on Klamath River post dam release sample locations and a powerpoint regarding Copco Lake groundwater wells). Mr. Dean additionally submitted a 16-page packet containing water sample analysis data from the Neilson Research Corporation. Mr. Dean provided an overview of the water sampling protocol and presented the powerpoint which identified six locations along the Klamath River where water samples were taken on January 31, 2024. Mr. Dean advised that additional samples were taken on February 6, 2024 and that the Environmental Health would have the sampling analysis information on the Department's website. Mr. Dean shared concerns regarding the need for more complete/comprehensive water sampling/testing to be done by the State following release/drawdown of the reservoir water.

Mr. Dean further presented a powerpoint that indicated groundwater wells on the south shore of Copco Lake that had gone dry and three wells that were being monitored for their water level (static water level in those wells had little change to date). Mr. Dean continued the powerpoint, including an overview of the California Water Board's summary in the dam removal project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that indicated possible impact of dam removal on various wells in the area and the potential for certain wells to be impacted or not by release of the reservoir water.

Klamath River resident Beatrijs Lieckens appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding expensive testing that will be needed for those living down along the Klamath River following the release of reservoir water and possible heavy metal contamination.

Local resident Chrissie Reynolds appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the need to test water coming from above the Copco Lake area due to water releases from the JC Boyle dam.

Local resident Crystal Maxwell appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the large expense needed to repair or replace a groundwater well and the minimal amount being offered through the mitigation fund.

Hornbrook resident William Simpson appeared before the Board, voicing concerns regarding the possible high levels of heavy metals and the need to test the sediment left behind following water releases/drawdown.

In response, Mr. Dean advised that the County's test for chromium indicated a level no higher than the level allowed by the State for drinking water.

Brief discussion followed between members of the Board and Mr. Dean regarding the possible dilution of contaminants following rain and pulse flow events, an undetermined timeframe for additional testing of water in the Klamath and the need to consider taking water samples and testing above Copco.

Supervisor Valenzuela was excused and left the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

County Presentations - County Administration / Klamath Mitigation Fund - Discussion re the Klamath Mitigation Fund's (KMF's) current operations, communication with the public and the structure and protocol of the KMF Program. Discussion only.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, advising that a statement was sent from Klamath Mitigation Fund (KMF) Administrator Monte Mendenhall to CKM Consultant Chelsea Murphy with regard to the County's invitation for the KMF to appear at the special meeting. Ms. Nielsen read the statement into the record, which stated that all claims that had been filed had received settlements, the possibility that negotiations could be re-opened on wells at the KMF's discretion, the Klamath River Restoration Corporation's (KRRRC's) efforts to contact residents potentially impacted by slope instability in order for the KMF to work with those property owners, and the KMF's process for considering claims that is not a public process, requiring public engagement or vetting. Ms. Nielsen further read that the KMF declined the County's/Board's invitation to attend the special meeting on February 13, 2024 and provided a contact address for the KMF.

Supervisor Kobseff and Haupt voiced concerns regarding the public nature of the KRRRC mitigation funding and requested that the County continue to request that the KMF appear before the Board.

Siskiyou County Water Users Association (SCWUA) President Richard Marshall appeared before the Board and voiced concerns regarding the legitimacy of the KMF's claim that this is a private/non-public process.

Participation in this item by members of the public was provided by ZOOM/teleconference phone.

Caller Mark Dana voiced concerns regarding the potential for many negative impacts associated with removal of the dams (i.e. loss of lake property values, tourism revenue losses, loss of fisheries).

Public Presentations - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission - Discussion and possible direction to County staff re presentation of an update regarding the Lower Klamath Dam Decommissioning Project, including Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) monitoring activities or responsibilities. Presentation, with staff directed to bring back a discussion item regarding formal interaction with FERC at the next special meeting.

Deputy County Administrator Elizabeth Nielsen appeared before the Board, advising that staff had been in contact with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on options for the County/Board to communicate with FERC regarding County and community concerns. Ms. Nielsen summarized the options, including an informal process for communication with FERC staff at the Office of Public Participation (OPP) or a formal process of filing a letter stating various concerns (begins an investigation process). Ms. Nielsen advised that the formal process could be lengthy versus the informal process from which answers or results could be seen sooner and requested input from the Board regarding the two options.

Supervisor Kobseff voiced support for the informal process to communicate with FERC for the time being.

Copco resident Chrissie Reynolds appeared before the Board, speaking in support of the County considering both formal and informal processes for contacting FERC.

Local resident Rex Cozzalio appeared before the Board speaking in support of the County considering both formal and information processes for contacting/engaging with FERC and sharing concerns that his contact with FERC did not result in a reply.

Discussion followed between members of the Board and Ms. Nielsen regarding the pros and cons of each option for formal or informal contact with FERC, the possibility that members of the public can engage with FERC, the need for this item to be brought back before the Board at the next special Klamath dam meeting, the County's interaction with the Federal agency as a local government body,

It was the consensus of the Board to direct staff to continue with informal engagement with FERC, including government to governmental department and to bring back before the Board at the next special meeting to discuss the possible formal engagement option.

In response to audience question, Ms. Nielsen advised that FERC is the entity for approving and issuing the order for removal of the Klamath dam hydroelectric facilities.

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Public Presentations - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission – (continued)

Audience member Michael Crow appeared before the Board, sharing concerns that information put out on social media regarding the chromium level in the Klamath River was incorrect.

Community Development Director Rick Dean advised that the maximum contaminant levels for drinking water for the State of California and Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the lab analysis report for the County’s water sampling was available in a packet submitted during an earlier agenda item.

Adjournment - There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, the meeting was adjourned.

Attest:
Laura Bynum, County Clerk

Michael N. Kobseff, Chair

By: _____
Deputy