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Interior Announces Additional Drought Relief Funds for the Klamath Project

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced an additional \$2 million in funding for the Klamath Water and Power Agency today. This will add to the \$5.25 million already provided in fiscal year 2010 to provide relief to irrigators during what is shaping up to be a very difficult water year.

"These additional funds will give the Klamath Water and Power Agency the ability to provide relief to more farmers adversely affected by the severe water shortages being experienced this year on the Klamath Project," said Salazar.

"Of the funds provided, approximately \$1.5 million will be available for irrigators served from Upper Klamath Lake and approximately \$500,000 available for irrigators served from Clear Lake and Gerber Reservoirs," added Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Michael L. Connor.

The Klamath Water and Power Agency administers the groundwater pumping program, often referred to as the "Water Bank", and land idling program on the Klamath Project. The additional funds will be used for additional land idling and to help alleviate the effects of below record carry over storage and extremely dry conditions affecting irrigation customers.

Currently, the Klamath Water and Power Agency estimates a savings of approximately 2 acre-feet for every acre idled. In addition, they predict local irrigators will receive assistance for the pumping of more than 100,000 acre-feet of well water. The additional funding announced today will increase these efforts.

Interior's Bureau of Reclamation is dedicated to working with Federal, state and local agencies along with the Tribes to provide releases to irrigation customers while maintaining all legal obligations for Endangered Species Act-listed species and Tribal Trust responsibilities.