

Basin water agreement to be signed in Salem

KBRA signing will be Thursday at the Capitol

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Stakeholders will sign the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement in Salem next week following years of negotiations to craft it and a related Klamath River dam removal agreement.

The signing ceremony will be in the rotunda of the state Capitol building at 10 a.m. Thursday. The event is open to the public.

A final draft of the restoration agreement was released in early January, and stakeholders and their constituents had until Tuesday to say whether they would support or reject the document.

The signing will usher in the next phase for the landmark agreement: securing legislation and funding from Congress.

Representatives of agricultural, tribal, fishery, environmental and governmental interests drafted the restoration agreement to resolve conflicts over water in the Klamath River watershed.

Removal of four hydroelectric dams on the Klamath River is a key component as a means to restore fish passage for salmon and other fish species. The restoration agreement also calls for stable water supplies and affordable power for irrigators, habitat restoration and provision of 92,000 acres of private forestland to the Klamath Tribes.

Support, opposition

Most stakeholders who worked on the documents have agreed to support it, including dam owner Pacifi-Corp.

A few others, including two environmental groups, the Hoopa tribe and a group representing irrigators off the Klamath Reclamation Project, oppose it. Some groups have yet to make a final decision, taking advantage of a part of the document that gives them 60 additional days to decide.

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