

Klamath Dam Agreement Signed

BY CHRIS LEHMAN

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Four dams along the Klamath River on the Oregon-California border are one step closer to coming down.

More than 30 governmental, agricultural, tribal and conservation groups along with PacifiCorp signed a landmark agreement at the Oregon capitol building Thursday.

But as Chris Lehman reports, the dams won't be coming down anytime soon.

The ceremony drew a packed crowd to the Oregon capitol rotunda.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger told the audience that dam removal would pave the way for salmon restoration in the Klamath basin.

Arnold Schwarzenegger: "I can already that the salmon fish is screaming 'I'll be back.'"

But Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski issued a reality check, reminding the crowd that the agreement still has to clear several funding and regulatory hurdles.

Ted Kulongoski: "Everyone who has been involved with today's agreements knows that there is much work still to be done."

That includes a review of the environmental impact of dam removal. Some conservation groups say the plan won't ensure that returning salmon get enough water during dry years.

Also attending the ceremony was Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. He said the Obama administration is fully committed to the agreement. But he said the federal government will further analyze the plan before giving the final go-ahead.

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