

# Oregon, California sign deal aimed at ending Klamath water wars

By [Scott Learn, The Oregonian](#)

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SALEM -- Farmers, tribes, environmental groups and government big wigs --including a certain well-muscled Sacramento politician -- collected in the Capitol rotunda today to sign what could end up being the United States' biggest dam removal and river restoration deal ever.

Under the two [Klamath Basin agreements](#), four [PacifiCorp](#) dams on the Klamath River could fall, salmon could reclaim 350 miles of one of the West's epic salmon rivers, tribes could see their fishing grounds restored and Oregon farmers could get guaranteed water supplies.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski noted that much work remains to be done to end one of the nation's highest profile water wars, including getting an extra \$500 million from Congress over the next 10 years toward river restoration and protection for the basin's farmers.

"But we are moving forward," Kulongoski said. "There is no need for this conflict to rage on."

The signing ceremony got a celebrity boost when California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger showed up, a bit late but just minutes after his plane touched down in Salem.

The Republican complimented a beaming Kulongoski, a Democrat, for his work on the complex deal. He also dropped a few Terminator movie references, saying it was time to say "Hasta la vista" to the dams, and suggesting that the Klamath River salmon are "screaming, 'I'll be back.'"

Critics of the deals, five years in the making, say they give too much to PacifiCorp and Klamath irrigators and don't guarantee water for fish and wildlife preserves near Upper Klamath Lake, a key spot on the Pacific Coast flyway.

The critics, including [Oregon Wild](#), also note that the dams wouldn't come down until 2020 at the earliest, and question tying dam removal to the complex deal for allocating water Upper Klamath Lake water between farmers and fish.

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