

Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement: Where it stands

Stakeholders weigh in on KBRA status

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This spring's primary elections in Klamath County weren't kind to supporters of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement.

John Elliott, the incumbent county commissioner who played a role in the agreement's development, was knocked out of the race in the Republican primary.

Karl Scronce, a supporter of the restoration agreement, tried and failed to unseat state Rep. Bill Garrard, R-Klamath Falls, an opponent of the KBRA and dam removal.

Those who had a role in crafting the agreement weigh in on where it stands politically now:

Tom Mallams, President of Klamath Off Project Water Users



Mallams has said he thinks the restoration agreement should go back to the drawing board, and he now believes Klamath County residents feel the same way.

"The voters definitely said what is out there is not acceptable," he said.

Mallams said voters are fed up with the closed-door process that yielded the document and how the elected officials involved refused to hear them out.

Becky Hyde, Board member of Upper Klamath Water Users Association



Hyde believes voters across the country are unhappy with overall leadership, and that Klamath County voters reflected that sentiment during the May primary elections.

However, she said, that doesn't change the status of the KBRA.

"The KBRA is moving forward. The parties that signed on are standing together," she said.

She added if opponents are elected to public office, that would give the opposition a voice and simultaneously require them to become accountable for finding viable alternatives.

Craig Tucker, Klamath campaign coordinator for Karuk Tribe of California



Tucker said recent elections for a board of supervisors position in Humboldt County pitted two KBRA supporters in a runoff election. A third candidate, who was opposed to the agreement, was defeated.

Support for the document appears strong in his area, but Tucker acknowledged that defeat of supporters in elections in Klamath County could be problematic as stakeholders work to implement the KBRA.

“It’s always a problem when you don’t have everyone supporting your agenda,” he said.

He said stakeholders need to focus on educating voters about the agreement and keep it from becoming a political or partisan issue.

Steve Kandra, Board member of Klamath Water Users Association



Kandra said the outcome of primary elections in Klamath County could make implementation of the KBRA more challenging, but it would still continue.

“We’re only one little neighborhood in the whole layout of the agreement,” he said. “There’s a whole galaxy of folks who want to see our agreement occur.”

The on-Project irrigator said he also wasn’t sure if it was the KBRA that knocked two supporters of the agreement out of their races.

He noted there was a lot of dissatisfaction with incumbents, as well as misinformation about the dam removal aspect of the agreement.

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