



KWUA Pushes Improvement in Disappointing Announcement on the 2024 Irrigation Deliveries



On April 15, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) issued a 2024 Klamath Project Operations Plan that provides 230,000 acre-feet of water from Upper Klamath Lake and the Klamath River for irrigation in 2024. This amounts to 35% of the projected net inflow to Upper Klamath Lake during the 2024 water year.

In a press release that same day, KWUA Executive Director Paul Simmons expressed frustration: “This winter, we have watched water be released to flush sediment in the Klamath River to mitigate impacts of dam removal. We have bent over backwards to put water on our national wildlife refuges. Within a few weeks, Upper Klamath Lake will be completely full for the first time in seven years, and the snowpack is in good shape for this time of year. Yet we are looking at the fifth worst allocation in the 120 years since the Klamath Project was authorized.”

Regardless of these concerns, KWUA and member district managers continue to engage in constructive dialogue directed toward improving the outlook. “There is more water available that we should be able to access,” said KWUA Water Policy Director Moss Driscoll. “We are talking that through with tribes and agencies, constructively, carefully, and deliberately, but with a sense of urgency.” This year, downstream dam removal activities dictate the maximum amounts of water that can be released to the Klamath River without compromising removal activities or public safety.

KWUA hopes that there may be an improved water announcement soon, with a prospect of doing still better than the still-conservative quantity that we may see. But farmers and ranchers, and their bankers, need to know what they have to work with.

KWUA Klamath Water Users
ASSOCIATION

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Major Decision from FERC Still Pending on Iron Gate Dam Removal

By Moss Driscoll

Serious questions remain about the Klamath River Renewal Corporation’s (KRRC) schedule and overall plan for removal of Iron Gate Dam.

On April 22, KRRC submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) its “optimal excavation schedule” and supporting information for removal of Iron Gate Dam. KRRC

had recently sought and been granted an extension of the deadline to produce this plan. The plan and supporting materials are not available to the public, as KRRC has filed these documents as “controlled unclassified information” pertaining to “critical energy infrastructure.”

In a public statement, KRRC stated that it is seeking authorization from FERC to begin removal of Iron Gate Dam by May 13, 2024. On April 26, FERC responded to KRRC’s request, authorizing the company to begin removing portions of the embankment to the dam, but deferring final agency action on the actual removal plan.

Iron Gate Dam is 173-foot tall, earthen fill embankment dam. Excavation of the embankment is required to proceed at a rate that preserves a section of the dam that still can withstand a one percent probable flood for that time of year. In total, removal of Iron Gate Dam involves the excavation and transport of 690,000 cubic yards of material. For comparison, a dump truck generally hauls between 10 to 14 cubic yards in a single trip.



Iron Gate Dam . Image courtesy of KRRC.

The need for caution when it comes to removing Iron Gate Dam has been closely scrutinized over the last year. Last April, an independent consulting engineer, Paul Schweiger, in reviewing KRRC’s overall plans, identified the need to evaluate and mitigate the risk associated with the potential for Iron Gate Dam to be overtopped during its removal. The concern stemmed from KRRC’s plan to still be removing the dam’s earthen embankment in September and October, when the chances of a large rain event increase.

KRRC’s engineers had previously identified overtopping and breaching of Iron Gate Dam due to a late season flood event as the “most significant Probable Failure Mode.” “All parties agree that the risk of Iron Gate overtopping due to a late season event would be unbearable and recovery could cost billions of dollars,” KRRC’s lead engineer, Mort McMillen, wrote in a technical memorandum last September.

KRRC is relying on an early start to removal of Iron Gate Dam as the primary measure to reduce the risk of dam failure and has assured FERC that Reclamation will assist with flow management from Upper Klamath Lake to allow construction to begin on time.

With water levels in Upper Klamath Lake still rising, a healthy snowpack remaining in the Cascades, and more precipitation in the forecast, Reclamation has nonetheless committed to KRRC that releases from Keno Dam will not exceed approximately 1,000 cubic feet per second.

Concern over potential flow restrictions with the outlet tunnel at Iron Gate Dam are heightened due to the failure of a 45-foot section of a ventilation pipe in the tunnel in January. The ventilation pipe was installed last year by KRRC to help ensure the free flow of water through the tunnel, but anchor bolts holding it failed shortly after the outlet was opened in January to start draining the reservoir. The loss of the ventilation pipe is causing cavitation within the tunnel at certain flows.

KWUA suspects that the cavitation occurring within the outlet tunnel at Iron Gate Dam likely explains in part the loss of 830,000 Chinook salmon fry that the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFW) released upstream of the dam in February. According to CDFW, the large mortality event was due to “gas bubble disease that likely occurred as the fry migrated through the Iron Gate Dam tunnel.”

In a public letter recently submitted to FERC, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors noted that the broken ventilation pipe remained in the river, downstream of the dam, for at least five days before being removed, posing a threat to public safety. The County’s letter alleges that KRRC failed to follow the notification process required under its Emergency Action Plan for this incident. The county’s letter further asks FERC to provide its assurance that failure of the outlet tunnel at Iron Gate Dam poses no current or future risk to the public.

Continued on page 3.

Protective Legislation Now Pending in Both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives

On April 11, 2024, Representative Cliff Bentz introduced H.R. 7938, the “Klamath Water Agreements Support Act,” in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill is very similar to legislation that has been introduced by Senator Wyden, on behalf of himself and Senator Merkley, in the U.S. Senate. The Senate bill, S. 484, the “Klamath Power and Facilities Agreement Support Act,” was introduced by the Oregon Senators in February of 2023.

In a press release, Representative Bentz stated, “This bill builds upon the promises made by parties to the agreement entered into regarding dam removal and species restoration, all intended to shield farmers from the adverse effects of dam removal. The legislation also ensures that the Department of the Interior remains accountable, preventing the transfer of river infrastructure unrelated to irrigation costs onto hardworking farmers.”

KWUA Executive Director Paul Simmons said, “There is much to be done to get any legislation enacted, but we are on the field of play. No one can promise everything, but we have a great Congressional delegation on our side and will continue to work with that bipartisan leadership.”



Cliff Bentz Image courtesy of bentz.house.gov/

Both the Senate and House bills include protections to avoid or minimize the negative effects of dam removal on Klamath Project irrigators. Specifically, if enacted, the legislation would prevent irrigation water users from bearing financial burdens for infrastructure not being removed that Reclamation will be taking over from PacifiCorp. It would also assist in avoiding new regulatory burdens that could result from salmonids occupying currently unoccupied

Continued from page 2.

KRRC had previously dismissed providing an alternative venting system to the pipe that failed in January as a risk mitigation measure.

In a April 9th letter to KRRC, FERC asked the company to address what would be done in the event the outlet tunnel at Iron Gate Dam becomes blocked by debris after the embankment has been excavated to a level below the level of the emergency spillway. FERC’s letter stated that it could not approve removal of Iron Gate Dam until this and other concerns had been resolved.

KRRC had indicated in previous filings that it would potentially attempt to breach the dam early as a contingency in the event the outlet tunnel becomes obstructed. KRRC’s April 22 filing apparently responded to this issue, although the information is not available to the public.

On April 17, FERC also responded in writing to U.S. Representative Doug LaMalfa, indicating that the agency was engaged in a “fact-gathering” inquiry, to determine KRRC’s compliance with FERC’s previously identified environmental and related requirements.

Tri-Counties Joint Meeting / Tour

On April 30, 2024, the Klamath County Board of Commissioners and the Siskiyou and Modoc Counties Boards of Supervisors will hold a joint meeting of their boards, which will include a tour of the Klamath Project.



Tri Counties meeting in Tulelake, Ca.

The three board chairs will gather in these public meetings at the KWUA office, from which the county leaders will immediately depart for a tour and overlook of Link River Dam and A Canal, the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake basins, and Cal-Ore Produce.

“There is nothing like getting people out to see things on the ground,” said Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors Chairman Michael Kobseff. “I know all of my colleagues are looking forward to it.”

In recent years, the three counties have been particularly active in discussions of water policy. “Tri-Counties” have emphasized not just the agricultural economy but the public health, safety, and welfare considerations that are implicated by federal water management.

In two past joint meetings, the Commissioners and Supervisors have approved joint letters to federal policymakers and members of Congress on a variety of topics important to local communities.

KWUA Delegation Visits Washington D.C.

A busy schedule of fourteen meetings and one Congressional hearing awaited KWUA representatives who traveled to Washington, D.C., earlier this month. Between April 9 and April 11, the group met with Senators Merkley and Wyden and their staffs, Representatives Bentz and LaMalfa and their staffs, Reclamation Commissioner Touton and other Reclamation leadership, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior Matt Strickler and leaders in the national wildlife refuge system, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Janet Coit, and staffs for both the Senate and House Agriculture Committee and House Natural Resources Committee.



Scott Seus, Paul Simmons, Commissioner Derrick DeGroot, Janet Coit, Tracey Liskey, Jeff Boyd, and Marc Staunton

“These visits and having these relationships are some of the most important things we can do,” said Tracey Liskey, President of KWUA Board of Directors. “Leaders in the Administration and Congress are genuinely interested in hearing from us, and as challenging as things may seem, they do listen.”

KWUA organized the trip on short notice after local producer and lease land farmer Marc Staunton received an invitation to testify at an April 10 hearing of the House Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries



Marc Staunton testifies in April 10 hearing.

regarding a proposed new regulation for refuge management.

During the April 10 hearing Mr. Staunton emphasized that the proposed regulation aimed at updating and revising a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy on Biological Diversity, Integrity, and Environmental Health failed to protect the partnership between agricultural producers and local wildlife managers, which is mutually beneficial for both agricultural communities and wildlife. Staunton noted, “We also had productive discussions with senior refuge management officials and legal advisors at the national level. I believe they now have a clearer understanding of our concerns regarding the proposed policy and how to address them.”

In addition to Mr. Liskey and Mr. Staunton, KWUA representatives included Vice President Jeff Boyd and Executive Director Paul Simmons. Given its direct interest in lease land farming, Tulelake Irrigation District (TID) also sent its director, Scott Seus, to join and participate.

As an unanticipated bonus, Klamath County Commissioner Derrick DeGroot was in Washington and willing to join nearly all of the



*Irrigators meet with Representative Bentz in D.C.
Pictured left to right: Rep. Cliff Bentz, Klamath County Commissioner Derrick DeGroot,
Tracey Liskey, Marc Staunton, Jeff Boyd, and Paul Simmons*

scheduled meetings. As a leader in the Klamath, Modoc, and Siskiyou “Tri-Counties” efforts, Commissioner DeGroot spoke to the public health and safety considerations that are affected by water policy and water management.

While KWUA was in Washington, Representative Bentz introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that is strongly supported by KWUA.

See related story on page 3.

According to Mr. Simmons, “Although we tailor our message and requests depending on who we talk to, we give them all the same information. At the end of the day,



*KWUA delegation stands in front of the Us Capital (Left to Right Scott Seus, Tracey
Liskey, Paul Simmons, Commissioner Derrick DeGroot, Marc Staunton, Jeff Boyd,
and Paul Simmons)*

we are saying simply that it is possible to stabilize this basin and we are committed to be part of the solution.”



The Klamath Project Drought Response Agency Announced the 2024 No-Irrigation Program Details



The Klamath Project Drought Response Agency (KPDRA) is currently accepting applications for the 2024 No-Irrigation Program (Program), which will provide financial assistance to local farmers and ranchers who typically irrigate with water from the Klamath Project.

The KPDRA anticipates having approximately \$8.5 million in funding for its program. However, the amount received from Reclamation may be more or less than this amount. The Program is expected to offer up to \$450 per acre to qualifying participants who agree not to irrigate from March 1 through October 1, 2024. However, Program payments are contingent on Reclamation approval and funding and participants' eligibility and compliance.

The Program provides two tiers of compensation for eligible unirrigated parcels.

- Full-season payments: Eligible parcels unirrigated from November 1, 2023, to October 31, 2024.
- Partial-season payments: Eligible parcels irrigated between November 1, 2023, and February 29, 2024, but unirrigated from March 1, 2024, to October 31, 2024. These payments are calculated at 50 percent of the full-season payment.

Application forms may be obtained in person from the offices of Klamath Irrigation District, TID, Parks & Ratliff, or KWUA. They can also be downloaded from klamathwaterbank.com. Additional methods to request an application include emailing info@klamathwaterbank.com or calling (541) 630-0752.

Program application deadline is June 14, 2024.

Visit klamathwaterbank.com for complete details on eligibility and how to apply. Applications must be postmarked by June 14, 2024, or physically delivered to Parks & Ratliff (620 Main St., Klamath Falls OR 97601) by 5:00 p.m.

The KPDRA will offer workshops on May 21-22, 2024, to assist in completing program applications. Please check the website for times and locations.

KWUA Looks to the Future at Annual Meeting

By Brian Gailey

On April 2, 2024, KWUA held its Annual Meeting to a capacity crowd of members, dignitaries, and government officials all present to support the local agricultural community.

Karl Stock, California Great Basin Regional Director of Reclamation, headlined the event. Additional guest speakers included Jeff McCreary Director of Operations of Ducks Unlimited Western Region, and John Crawford, a lifelong leader and champion of the agricultural community.

“Reclamation is in my blood, farming is in my blood,” said Director Stock in his address to the audience. “I have a personal connection to farming and have maintained that interest as I left our farm and went to school for economics.”

Director Stock continued, “My first year [in Reclamation] was 2001, a year I know all of you are



Karl Stock, Regional Director of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, headlined the 2024 KWUA Annual Meeting on April 2, 2024. Photo by Brian Gailey

familiar with. I know it has been a rough road since then, and I want to acknowledge that. Reclamation hasn't always gotten everything always just right ... I

believe we have tried, but our work is very complex.”

Director Stock’s report discussed the system’s current hydrology. However, he did not provide any allocation numbers for water users at the meeting but indicated that the announcement would be coming by April 15.

“Western agriculture is deeply personal and meaningful to me. I think we have all come to realize that agriculture in the West is sustainable when it is part of a healthy, balanced ecosystem,” explained Director Stock.

Jeff McCreary spoke next about the importance of fish, farms, and waterfowl and how Ducks Unlimited works with irrigators to restore refuges within the Klamath Basin Refuge Complex.

“My favorite time of the year starts in October and goes through [April],” stated Mr. McCreary. “That is because it’s when birds are down here, it’s when we see them. This time of year, is really neat because ... they are just all over the place.”

“[The birds] are still here because we had water this year. It is refreshing to see how nature works and how we are part of it. The things we do and the decisions that we make about the land affect more than just us - it affects the world,” Mr. McCreary explained.

Mr. McCreary went on to discuss the Ducks Unlimited mission, the waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway, and how the Klamath Basin is one of the most important locations for waterfowl worldwide.



Jeff McCreary of Ducks Unlimited spoke next about the importance of fish, farms, and waterfowl and how Ducks Unlimited works with irrigators to restore refuges within the Klamath Basin Refuge Complex. Photo by Brian Gailey

partners at Ducks Unlimited and the blessing of the Modoc Nation,” said Mr. Crawford. “We are putting water where it desperately needs to go, but we shouldn’t have to shoulder that responsibility. Shame on the agencies that should be responsible. Hopefully, we can reroute the Pacific Flyway back to our basin and recreate the habitat for hundreds of species of birds, fish, and animals.”

In addition to the guest speakers, KWUA President Tracey Liskey and Vice President Jeff Boyd addressed the attendees. Executive Director Paul Simmons provided a year-in-review.

“Sometimes it feels like an awful lot of our job is to prevent bad things from happening or to make some things less bad than what might have otherwise been,” stated Mr. Simmons. “For us, adequate water is the highest priority – it is always the highest priority. That will never change.”

KWUA thanks all our guest speakers for engaging, educating, and entertaining at the Annual Meeting. We also thank Lost River FFA for catering the event and Rockin’ Diamond for the ice-cold refreshments.

We also thank our sponsors, Gold Dust & Walker Farms, Nygrens Ag Repair, Pacific Crest Federal Credit Union, Rabo AgriFinance, and Somach Simmons & Dunn. KWUA could not hold this event without them.



A lifelong leader and champion of the agricultural community, John Crawford captivates the audience through his storytelling, life experiences, and tales from his time on the farm. Photo by Brian Gailey

The final guest speaker of the evening was John Crawford. Mr. Crawford’s storytelling, life experiences, and tales from his time on the farm charmed the audience. However, he began by questioning federal mismanagement of refuge water.

“Our irrigation district [TID] is doing some good things with our



KWUA Seats New Board for 2024

KWUA's Board of Directors strives to keep member districts, their patrons, and other interested parties informed. Board members help with the dissemination of information received at our monthly board meetings.

The KWUA board will hold its regular business meeting on May 8, 2024. If you would like more in-depth information, we encourage you to contact your respective district board member listed on our website.

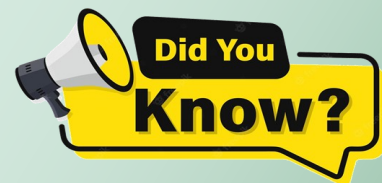
- Position 1 (TID) Primary: Brad Kirby; Alternate: Gary Wright
- Position 2 (KID) Primary: Dave Hamel; Alternate: Rodney Cheyne
- Position 3 (KDD) Primary: Tracey Liskey; Alternate: Luther Horsley
- Position 4 (At-Large) Primary: Ty Kliewer; Alternate: Mike Bryne
- Position 5 (SVID) Primary: Nick Grounds; Alternate: Rob Unruh
- Position 6 (At-Large) Primary: Justin Eary; Alternate: Scott Seus
- Position 7 (Van Brimmer/Westside/Sunnyside) Primary: Mike McKoen; Alternate: Marc Staunton
- Position 8 (At-Large/Pioneer) Primary: Tricia Walker; Alternate: Debbie Duncan
- Position 9 (KBID) Primary: Ry Kliewer; Alternate: Lane Roelle
- Position 10 (At-Large) Primary: Jeff Boyd; Alternate: Paul Crawford
- Position 11 (At-Large) Primary: Ben DuVal; Alternate: Kyle Staunton

Elected 2024 KWUA Officers: President: Tracey Liskey; Vice President: Jeff Boyd; Secretary: Mike McKoen; and Treasurer: Tricia Walker

FROM YOUR DISTRICTS UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Klamath Irrigation District will hold its Board of Directors meeting on May 9 @ 1:00 pm at the KID office. www.klamathid.org
- Tulalake Irrigation District will hold its monthly Board of Directors meeting on May 13 @ 8:00 pm. www.tulalakeid.com
- KWUA will hold its monthly Board of Directors meeting on May 8 @ 2:00 pm. www.kwua.org
- Klamath Drainage District will hold its monthly Board of Directors meeting on May 16 @ 1:00 pm. www.klamathdrainagedistrict.org
- Pioneer Improvement District will hold its monthly Board of Directors meeting on May 6 @ 5:30 pm.

Klamath Irrigation District patrons, did you know that KID has a newsletter with all the current water happenings. [Click here to read the latest issues.](#)



Stay current on the latest current events at [Basin Ag News](#) and on KWUA [Facebook page](#).

KWUA offers notary services. Chelsea Shearer is a certified Notary Public and KWUA offers her notary services free to all members and patrons of member districts. To schedule an appointment with Chelsea, call the office at 541-883-6100.

KWUA has copies of all contracts between Reclamation and districts and individuals. These contracts, of which there are hundreds, date to as early as 1909. Copies are available to our members without charge and to others at our cost.

Klamath Irrigation District (KID), Tulalake Irrigation District (TID), and Klamath Drainage District (KDD) all have district websites with the latest information on current events in their districts. Visit our website <https://kwua.org/member-districts/> for links to their sites.



Oregon PUC to take Public Comments on Power Rate Increases

In an unprecedented move, PacifiCorp (aka Pacific Power) has proposed to increase irrigation pumping power rates for its Oregon ratepayers by an overall net amount of 21.5 percent on January 1, 2025.

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC) wants to hear from you. For PacifiCorp's proposed rate increases, a Public Comment Hearing is scheduled from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 30, 2024. The hearing will take place via Zoom and will be overseen by Judge Alison Lackey.

<https://puc-oregon-gov.zoomgov.com/j/1601118631?pwd=UEljb2lkc0VwL2VEEdVlyTzRFRTFIUT09>

PacifiCorp currently has three ongoing electric rate cases in the State of Oregon. These rate cases are being adjudicated before the OPUC, ultimately determining the final amount of the rate increases or decreases in each case.

“KWUA has intervened in all three of these rate cases in order to represent and protect the interests of water users in the Upper Klamath Basin,” said KWUA Executive Director Paul Simmons. “As an intervenor, KWUA can submit testimony, issue and review data requests, and participate in settlement negotiations between PacifiCorp, OPUC Staff, and the other parties to the cases.”

“In two cases, PacifiCorp has requested that the rate increases/decreases be effective January 1, 2025. The third case has been ongoing since 2021, and it is currently unknown when the rate increase associated with that proceeding will be effective,” stated Lloyd Reed, KWUA’s Power Consultant.

Reed added, “Whatever the final rate increases/ decreases in the three cases become, it is essential to note that the rate impacts will be additive in nature.”

PacifiCorp’s proposed combined 2025 General Rate Case plus the 2025 Transitional Adjustment Mechanism rate increases for other customer classes are as follows:

- Residential: +20.7%
- Small Commercial: +21.6%
- Medium Commercial: +9.9%
- Large Commercial / Industrial: +12.4%

Complete details regarding each of the three cases can be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/puc/edockets/Pages/default.aspx>

2025 General Rate Case, OPUC Docket Number UE-433

PacifiCorp filed its 2025 General Rate Case (GRC) with the OPUC on February 14, 2024, with the proposed new rates that would become effective January 1, 2025.

In this filing, PacifiCorp requests to increase its rates in Oregon by approximately \$322.3 million annually. This overall increase translates to an average rate increase across all customer classes of +17.9 percent.

“For the agricultural class, PacifiCorp proposes increasing the Schedule 41 irrigation/drainage rate by +22.4 percent,” explained Reed. “Meanwhile, PacifiCorp’s last GRC in 2023 resulted in an average rate increase to Schedule 41 customers of approximately 5.2 percent.”

The primary drivers of the very large rate increase being sought by PacifiCorp are:

- Increased wildfire mitigation and vegetation management costs,
- Increased costs for wildfire insurance, and
- Two new transmission projects and two wind plants are being placed into service for the first time.

“Approximately 51 percent of the overall requested rate increase is associated with increased wildfire-related costs. In addition, PacifiCorp is proposing to raise its Return on Equity [a measure of the Company’s profit margin] from the currently-in-effect figure of 9.5 percent to 10.3 percent,” stated Reed.

2025 Transitional Adjustment Mechanism Case, OPUC Docket Number UE-434

PacifiCorp filed its 2025 Transition Adjustment Mechanism (TAM) with the OPUC on February 14, 2024, with the proposed new adjustment to base rates to be effective January 1, 2025.

In this filing, PacifiCorp requests to decrease its rates in Oregon by approximately \$18.3 million for the calendar year 2025. This figure translates to an average rate decrease across all customer classes of -1.0 percent. PacifiCorp proposes to decrease the Schedule 41 irrigation/drainage rate by -0.9 percent for the agricultural class.

PacifiCorp files its TAM cases annually to adjust its rates for changes in its variable power costs, also referred to as Net Power Costs. Examples of the key drivers that impact PAC’s Net Power Costs are:

- Increases or decreases to forecasted fuel prices for PacifiCorp’s fleet of natural gas-fired and coal-fired power plants,
- Increases or decreases in regional wholesale power prices, and
- Increases or decreases in the forecasted value of certain tax credits that PAC receives on its fleet of wind plants.

Coal Plant/Coal Mine Decommissioning Cost Case, OPUC Docket No. UM-2183

PacifiCorp is in the process of retiring many of its coal-fired power plants and replacing them with non-GHG-emitting wind and solar facilities. In addition, PacifiCorp is in the process of closing several coal mines that it owns, which are utilized to fuel its coal

plants.

PacifiCorp originally proposed to recover many of these decommissioning costs in its 2021 GRC. However, the OPUC did not allow the company to begin recovering in rates of approximately \$25.4 million per year across the period 2022 – 2029 until it provided additional details regarding how it and a third-party consultant developed the cost estimates.

PacifiCorp initiated the UM-2183 proceeding in July 2021, intending to have the additional decommissioning costs incorporated into rates beginning January 1, 2022.

However, OPUC Staff and the other parties to the case (including KWUA) proposed that PacifiCorp hire a third-party “independent evaluator” to review the previous decommissioning studies and provide an expert opinion on the reasonableness of the figures.

“The independent evaluator has completed its review,” stated Reed. “However, the case progresses very slowly, and there is no established date when the additional decommissioning costs will be incorporated into rates.”

If the OPUC ultimately approves the total amount of PacifiCorp’s original request and if the decommissioning costs are incorporated into rates beginning January 1, 2025 – the estimated increase to agricultural customers Schedule 41 irrigation/drainage rate would be approximately +1.9 percent across the period 2025 – 2029 (relative to the currently in-effect rate).

