



KATE BROWN
Governor

April 28, 2022

Secretary Deborah Haaland
Secretary of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20240

Commissioner Camille Touton
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20240-0001

Dear Secretary Haaland,

Pursuant to the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act (Act), I am requesting assistance in the State of Oregon. The financial assistance provided by the Act becomes operative upon this request. This request has been coordinated with the Bonneville Power Administration as described in the Act.

The entire West faces another year of unprecedented and persistent drought. Water conditions in the Klamath Basin are again below average, and years of chronic drought have led to lower stream-flows than seen in decades. In addition to extremely low stream-flows, the snowpack continues to fall significantly below annual median levels — which is important as the snowpack acts as a natural water storage reservoir providing critical summer flows. The majority of Oregon's Klamath County is currently in Drought Level Four, and we are seeing the cumulative impacts of the region having faced drought in eight out of the last ten years.

Irrigated agriculture is a valuable and important part of the regional economy. Unfortunately, the impacts of warmer temperatures and reduced snowpack are having real consequences in the Klamath Basin, increasing the already difficult water management challenges in the area. This year's flow forecast indicates that there will be little to no water available for use within wildlife refuges in the Klamath Basin. These refuges are very critical to birds which follow the Pacific Flyway.

I am encouraged by the recent efforts of federal, state and local partners to come together toward long-term, resilient solutions to drought in the Klamath. I appreciate your leadership in leading these conversations. Oregon stands ready to partner with you. I am still hopeful that solutions can be identified and implemented in both the short and long term.

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Ultimately, the ongoing conflicts over water in the Klamath Basin are the result of more demand than there is available water supply. Action needs to be taken to reduce water demand within the Klamath Basin, including the Klamath Project. Funds available through this Act should be used to implement actions to help permanently reduce the high demand, such as improving water delivery and user efficiency. Rather than idling acres for one year, funds could purchase marginal irrigated farmland with the intent to change from irrigation to dryland farming. Additionally, a water management plan needs to be developed for future years as we continue to experience warmer temperatures with reduced snowpack.

I very much appreciate the effort put forth by the U.S. Department of Interior in putting this into effect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Brown". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Governor Kate Brown