

Siskiyou Declares Emergency over Klamath River Water Quality

April 9, 2024



RIVER OF THE YEAR **CONTAMINATED**

LEAD, ALUMINUM, ARSENIC AND OTHER TOXINS
FOUND IN KLAMATH RIVER SEDIMENTS AND WATER

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors declared a state of emergency following the Lower Klamath Dam removal and Klamath River water quality. The Declaration invites additional funding from the State should Gov. Gavin Newsom similarly declare a state of emergency.

The funding would be directed to Klamath River clean up and ensure the pre-planned disaster never happens again, according to an unidentified community resident at last week's Siskiyou Board Special Meeting. Siskiyou County constituents have been demanding action to what some residents are calling a "ticking time bomb."

Supervisors listened to constituents' reports of dead wildlife and toxic heavy metal sediments such as arsenic and lead accumulation over decades, following the ongoing dam removal project. The vote to declare an emergency was 4-1, with Siskiyou Supervisor Ed Valenzuela dissenting.

The Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) is tasked in removing the four hydroelectric dams and restoring a free flowing river. KRRC president Mark Branscom was not alarmed by the initial snapshot of high water toxicity and cautioned those high levels would diminish over time. Generally, the Klamath River water is not utilized for drinking but many residents along the river draw their water needs from wells adjacent to the Klamath.

The exigent concern of water quality in the Klamath was palpable.

The Triplicate contacted Del Norte Environmental Health (EHD) Senior Environmental Health Specialist Houawa Moua who reported EHD does not have any records for any residence that is using surface water from the Klamath River as their water source. Pending further investigation, there is no plan in Del Norte to test Klamath River water quality following Siskiyou's declaration.