

## Thaler, Parker@Waterboards

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**From:** J. Marshall Staunton <marshall@cot.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 29, 2016 2:25 PM  
**To:** Thaler, Parker@Waterboards  
**Cc:** Marc Staunton; sidwstaunton@gmail.com; Ed Staunton  
**Subject:** Klamath River Dam removal comments

To: Parker Thaler  
From: Marshall Staunton, Staunton Farms LP  
President -Tulelake Growers Association

Re: Klamath River Hydroelectric Project certification process:

Dear Parker,

I wish to make comments representing Staunton Farms which is owned by my brothers, my nephew and myself and employs over twenty people receiving living wage jobs. During busy times we hire an additional thirty or more seasonal employees. We grow potatoes, onions, alfalfa, wheat, barley and seed garlic. Staunton Farms got its start in 1929 with the award of a Bureau of Reclamation homestead to my grandfather - Web Staunton.

We are located in Tulelake, California. Siskiyou, Modoc and Klamath counties all divide and intersect our valley. Brother Ed and I live in Siskiyou county, nephew Marc lives in Modoc county and brother Sid recently moved ten miles north near Malin - in Klamath County, Oregon.

Our surface water irrigation primarily derives from Upper Klamath Lake through the canals of the Klamath Project.

The Tulelake Growers Association is made up of the descendants of homesteaders who were eligible being veterans of either World War I or II. They received their homesteads after meeting qualifications and being lucky enough to see their lottery homestead drawn from a pickle jar. The US government sponsored and conducted 11 homestead drawings from 1922 to 1945. Some deeds came with a presidential stamp. All deeds conveyed water rights. We farmed with security of land and water - until.

By 1992 - the homesteaders water rights were overtaken by the endangered species act's preeminent priority - revealed in a Clinton era solicitors opinion. ESA first, Tribal trust second, Irrigation waters third. In 2001 the Klamath Project became the first Bureau of Reclamation irrigation project to receive a "zero" allocation. All waters derived from runoff through Upper Klamath Lake into the Klamath River were deemed necessary for for endangered coho salmon and endangered shortnose and longnose sucker fish. The Klamath Project dried up and world famous Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuge dried up. We farmers lost our way of life that year. Over two dozen Klamath Project farm families went bankrupt.

The valley rallied strongly and non-violently through multiple protests of which thousands would attend. We received help in the form of government checks used to pay water district bills and land payments. We received little water until a pittance was released in August. Farmers and ranchers rushed to groundwater as a last ditch survival strategy. Well drillers were busy and expensive.

We needed desperately to change the approach toward a habitat restoration + conservation approach away from a water shut off fisheries protection approach. We could develop a Klamath restoration strategy better than 2001's , more water = more fish.

We decided to maintain our way of life through collaboration between the Klamath Waterusers, the Klamath River Tribes, Pacificorp and the environmental/conservation groups which support the Klamath Basin Restoration agreement legislation coupled to the Klamath Hydropower agreements.

This package has my farm's support and my valley's support. As a former co-chair of the Upper Klamath Basin Working group, we strived during the early years, before the agreements, to get Tribal, Irrigation and environmental groups to consider a package of river restoration proposals much of which are now contained in today's KBRA and Klamath Hydropower agreements.

We feel the removal of the four Klamath River dams is integral to re-directing the endangered fisheries protection mechanisms toward a massive habitat conservation approach. This approach would allow for fish recovery without emasculating Klamath Project farmers and the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. We do not see the concerns of the Yreka area citizens as rising to the level of our impacts should the removal of the dams and implementation of large-scale river restoration **not** be undertaken. A beautiful river teeming with salmonids beats a river dotted with scum filled reservoirs teeming with bass, (given a little time to restore trees and vegetation). None of the dams are used for irrigation.

We would be honored if the state of California would honor Tulelake's descendants of veterans, who struggle to survive farming without the strong fisheries restoration + water sharing effort embodied in the Klamath Agreements.

Sincerely, Marshall Staunton  
Staunton Farms LP  
Tulelake Growers Association