

Karuk Tribe of California

PRESS RELEASE

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BILLIONAIRE BUFFET GIVES TO CHARITY WHILE HIS DAMS KILL SALMON AND COMPROMISE TRIBAL CULTURES

Karuk Tribe appeals to Buffet: Remove your dams, save our salmon

Orleans, CA – According to an Associated Press report, Billionaire investor Warren Buffet intends to work with the Gates Foundation to donate billions of dollars to charity. Meanwhile, on the Klamath River, dams that are owned by a subsidiary of Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. continues to kill salmon, host toxic algae blooms, and put Tribal and non-native fishermen out of work.

According to the AP, the Gates Foundation stated that "Warren [Buffet] has not only an amazing intellect but also a strong sense of justice."

The Karuk Tribe remains unconvinced. "Until Mr. Buffet removes his dams which are driving our fish into extinction, I will be forced to question his sense of justice," commented Leaf Hillman, Vice Chairman of the Karuk Tribe.

The Karuk Tribe is currently working with neighboring Tribes, conservation organizations, and commercial fishermen to get four of the six Klamath River dams removed. The dams block access to over 350 miles of salmon habitat and instead provide habitat for the blue green algae *Microcystis aeruginosa*, a producer of tumor promoting toxins.

The dams are owned and operated by Portland, Oregon based PacifiCorp. PacifiCorp was recently bought by a Buffet owned company after the previous owner, Scottish Power, was targeted by the Tribes' campaign. In 2004 and 2005, Tribal leaders protested Scottish Power's shareholder meetings in Scotland.

"Not only is dam removal the right thing to do morally, it makes economic sense for ratepayers," according to Hillman.

In April, the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued mandatory terms and conditions for a 40 license renewal for the dams. These terms and conditions include the construction of fish ladders and increased river flows. Together, argue the Tribes, these conditions make removal a better deal for ratepayers.

"Spending \$187 million to put ladders on these antiquated dams is a waste of ratepayer money. It would be cheaper to remove them," says Hillman.

In addition, the dams have very little power production value. According to a 2002 report by the California Energy Commission, “Because of the small capacity of the Klamath hydro units...removal of these units will not have a significant reliability impact on a larger regional scale...”

The report went on to add that, “decommissioning is a feasible alternative from the perspective of impacts to statewide electricity resource adequacy and that replacement energy is available in the near term.”

The Buffet family has demonstrated an interest in Native American issues in the past. Ironically, Hillman was a finalist for the Buffet Award for Indigenous Leadership last year.

“Mr. Buffet may not yet understand how his dams affect my people. We have subsisted on salmon since the beginning of time. But today we can’t catch enough fish for our ceremonies much less feed ourselves. We need his help to solve this problem since his employees at PacifiCorp are failing to address the needs of the Tribes and other communities that depend on this fishery,” concludes Hillman.

This year, the California and Oregon economies will lose an estimated \$150 million due to commercial fisheries closures. The closures were instituted to protect weak stocks of Klamath River salmon.

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