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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Siskiyou County, California, Modoc County, California, and Klamath County, Oregon Urge a Pause in Dispersal of \$162 Million for Klamath Watershed Projects under Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 117-58**

In a united effort to ensure the responsible and effective use of funds, Siskiyou County, Modoc County, and Klamath County (the Tri-Counties) have come together to request to the Department of the Interior a temporary pause in the dispersal of the \$162 million allocated for Watershed projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, 117-58. While the counties wholeheartedly support the funding and its potential benefits for the region, they believe it is crucial to assess the strength and viability of the proposed projects before moving forward.

The Klamath Watershed has long been a focal point for water resource management. The Watershed is a unique and complex ecosystem that requires a balanced approach to address the diverse needs of the region. Recognizing the significance of this funding allocation in addressing the needs of the watershed, the counties commend the federal government for its commitment to funding projects in the area. However, the Tri-Counties are concerned about the lack of thorough investigation and assessment of the proposed plans, which are critical to ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the Watershed.

To address these concerns and ensure the best possible outcomes for the Klamath Watershed, the Tri-Counties propose the development of an advisory committee. This committee will consist of governmental voting representatives from local counties and tribal communities. The committee's primary purpose will be to establish a robust review process that evaluates the proposed projects and facilitates the appropriate dispersal of funding to ensure cohesive and quantifiable results, and brings together the Watersheds communities.

The Tri-Counties firmly believe that a comprehensive review process, involving a diverse range of perspectives, will help avoid random acts of restoration and ensure that the projects selected align with the long-term goals of the Klamath Watershed. The Tri-Counties aim to enhance transparency and accountability in the decision-making process. Through these partnerships, the review process will consider the unique perspectives, challenges and goals of each group.

The Tri-Counties are committed to working collaboratively and believe that by developing a structured review process, the committee will play a vital role in vetting and prioritizing projects that offer the greatest potential for the basin's ecological health, water management, and community resilience.

The Tri-Counties are confident that by advocating for a pause in the dispersal of funds and establishing an advisory committee, they can strike a balance that supports both the forward development of projects while also supporting long-term resolution to the watershed.

The Tri-Counties look forward to continued discussions with federal authorities and relevant stakeholders to establish the advisory committee and implement the necessary review process. By taking this proactive step, the Tri-Counties affirm their commitment to responsible governance, sustainable development, preservation, and fostering a resilient and thriving Klamath Watershed.

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