



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, D.C. 20240

W-6332

SEP 14 2000

Mr. Jim Lone  
Chairman  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224  
Portland, Oregon 97201

RECEIVED

SEP 14 2000

PFMC

Dear Mr. Lone:

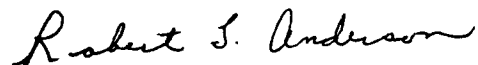
The Secretary has asked me to respond to your June 1, 2000, letter regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's 2000 Annual Operations Plan for the Klamath Project.

The Department of the Interior shares your concerns about the status of anadromous fish in the Northwest, particularly those fish which are assets to Indian Tribes and those listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Klamath Basin has both these issues. Interior is also responsible for endangered, treaty-protected fish upstream; for irrigation contracts; and for waterfowl refuges in the Basin. In recognition of the wide range of Interior responsibilities, Reclamation has been issuing an annual operations plan or advisory since 1995, to inform interested parties of expected operations. Those plans are based on full consideration of the best available science including current inflow conditions, forecast supply, and biological data. To support planning efforts, Reclamation funds and/or conducts a number of investigations to increase their knowledge of the requirements of the water-dependant resources in the Basin. This has been done in coordination and cooperation with other resource interests including Tribes, State and Federal agencies.

Reclamation is also in the process of developing a long-term operation plan for the Project with an Environmental Impact Statement. This has resulted in considerable expectations being placed on the Project. The Project, one of Reclamation's first, was designed with relatively little storage capability and, therefore, does not have the benefit of significant multiple-year carryover storage for use in dry years; consequently, operation is very vulnerable to real-time hydrology. In addition, there are substantial non-Project diversions not controlled by Reclamation which impact the amount of available water. These diversions are difficult to predict, and the impacts to the Project operations are difficult to manage. During formulation of the 2000 Annual Operations Plan, operational flexibility, within Interior's authority, was weighed against all available scientific information. It was determined that the planned operation would be consistent with all legal obligations. The Plan was based on a below-average runoff forecast, and subsequent conditions have confirmed the accuracy of that forecast.

We look forward to working with you towards the eventual resolution of these difficult issues. If you require additional information, please contact Mr. Lester Snow, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, at (916) 978-5000 or TDD (916) 978-5608.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert T. Anderson".

Robert T. Anderson  
Counselor to the Secretary

cc: Mr. Rod McInnis  
Acting Regional Administrator  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802