United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 30 2012

Ms. Grace Bennett
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
P.O. Box 750
201 Fourth Street
Yreka, California 96097

Subject: Request for Correction of Information Disseminated as a Result of the Klamath Nonuse Valuation Survey, OMB Control Number 1090-0010 and Withdrawal of Final Report Disseminating Information Gained from the Survey.

Dear Ms. Bennett:

This letter is in response to the request for correction of information pursuant to the Information Quality Act ("IQA") you submitted on behalf of the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors ("Board") concerning information disseminated by the Department of the Interior (DOI or "Department") in the Final Report on the Klamath River Basin Restoration Nonuse Value Survey, dated January 19, 2012 ("Final Report").

In the IQA request for correction, you asserted that the Final Report is based on data from the Nonuse Valuation Survey ("Survey") that is flawed because the Survey instructions are "misleading and false in the representation that there will be no restoration projects if No Action is the decision" and "fail to advise the respondents of the economic and environmental benefits of continuation of the hydroelectric power, flood control, and irrigation functions served by the dams" or "the adverse environmental impacts of releasing toxic sediment that will negatively affect water quality and fish health for decades." You also claim that "Fatal flaws throughout the survey mislead respondents and create a bias for an action plan that destroys the dams."

This request for correction also seeks to incorporate by reference other issues concerning the Survey that were raised in a prior IQA challenge submitted by PacifiCorp and by the Board in its comments to the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding restoration of the Klamath River Basin. As relief, you request that the Department withdraw the Final Report, publicly acknowledge that the Final Report is based on flawed data and cease its use of the Survey or data gathered by the Survey.

Pursuant to the DOI Information Quality Guidelines, the Department must ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated to the public. "Quality" is an encompassing term comprising utility, objectivity, and integrity. "Utility" refers to the usefulness of the information to its intended audience. "Objectivity" concerns whether the information is presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner and the substance of the information is generated using sound and reproducible methodology. "Integrity" refers to protection of the information from corruption or falsification.

In response to your challenge of the information in the Final Report, we evaluated the Final Report under the criteria described above and determined that it is an accurate and unbiased summary of the data

collected by the Survey, it was generated using sound and reproducible methodology, contains useful information, and was adequately protected from corruption or falsification. Accordingly, we decline to withdraw the Final Report.

With respect to your challenge to the information in the Survey, we have determined that identical or very similar issues were raised and resolved in the previous IQA request for correction you referenced from PacifiCorp. Accordingly, and consistent with the DOI Information Quality Guidelines, we decline to incorporate and re-examine those issues here, and refer you instead to our response to the PacifiCorp challenge at: http://www.doi.gov/ocio/information_management/iq-response-2012.cfm.

As noted in our response to PacifiCorp, the Department took a number of steps to ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the Survey. Specifically, the Department followed a systematic and iterative survey design process, starting with a white paper that described the planned approach; continuing with many rounds of review, pre-testing, and revisions; and ending with a pilot test of the survey. The Survey design was developed in conjunction with a private firm that is an industry leader in this field and followed best practices in survey design methods. We also made a number of changes to the original text of the Survey in response to the concerns previously raised by PacifiCorp. OMB reviewed those changes in the context of the Paperwork Reduction Act, which focuses on the objectivity and utility of the survey design. For example, the Survey that was ultimately employed by us stated that:

- Page 3: "The Klamath River Basin is home to farms, fisheries (commercial, recreational and tribal), dams that produce hydroelectric power, and endangered fish species. Its rivers, lakes, reservoirs and wildlife refuges also support many different kinds of recreation."

- Page 5: "Recreation and Tourism. The basin supports a wide range of water-based recreation activities, including fishing, boating, and swimming. It contains blue ribbon trout streams, highly rated whitewater rapids for rafting, a well-regarded reservoir fishery for yellow perch, and bird watching and waterfowl hunting opportunities. Salmon from the basin also support recreational fishing in the Pacific Ocean."

- Page 6: "Although past and current efforts to improve conditions by governments, tribes, local communities and landowners have been helpful, more is needed to significantly increase wild fish populations in the basin."

- Page 14: "The agreement would also ... eliminate recreational activities supported by the dams, about 100 homes now located near the shores of the reservoirs would lose their lakefront view."

As a result, we have determined the text of the Survey employed by the Department met the criteria of the IQA; therefore, we respectfully disagree that the Final Report based on the Survey is flawed and decline to discontinue any use of the Survey or data gathered by the Survey. Furthermore, we note that survey results are only one of a number of pieces of information to be considered within the larger set of information developed in the context of any potential Secretarial Determination.

Finally, we decline to incorporate and address the Board's comments on the draft EIS. We note that the definition of the No Action plan used in the Survey was consistent with the definition used in the draft EIS No Action plan. The other issues raised in the letter submitted by the Board on the draft EIS cover a the wide variety of issues analyzed in that draft document (e.g., basin restoration, water quality, sediments, aquatic resources, fisheries, algae, terrestrial resources, air quality, noise, waste disposal, energy use, socioeconomics and land use, cultural and historic resources, environmental justice), many of which are not appropriate for challenge under the IQA. Accordingly, the Department will address the Board's comments in the EIS public comment and response process rather than the request for correction process consistent the provision cited below in the DOI Information Quality Guidelines:

> "The Department conducts a substantial amount of business through processes which involve a structured opportunity for public review and comment on proposed documents prior to their issuance in final form. These activities include but are not limited to, rulemakings and analyses conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In these instances, requests made under these Information Quality Guidelines for corrections of information in draft documents will be treated as a comment on the draft document and the response will be included in the final document." *(See* Department of the Interior Information Quality Guidelines, page 5)

If the Board wishes to appeal this decision, an appeal must be submitted within 21 calendar days to:

Office of the Chief Information Officer
Attention: Information Quality Correction Request Processing
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Mail Stop 5547-MIB
Washington, D.C. 20240

Sincerely,

Joel Clement
Director, Office of Policy Analysis

cc:
Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Department of the Interior
Michael Connor, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Vany Kaiser, Departmental Information Quality Officer
Rhea Graham, Program Manager/Engineering Geologist, Bureau of Reclamation