
MEMORANDUM

TO: BETH ESCHENBACH AND ROBERT GEARHEART
FROM: ENGR 410 STUDENT
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE TRINITY RIVER EIS/EIR PUBLIC MEETING
DATE: DECEMBER 1, 1999

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to offer a review of the Trinity River EIS/EIR public meeting held on November 23, 1999 at 1pm in Eureka, Ca. The format of the meeting, receptiveness of the agencies to public comment and the issues addressed by the public are included.

Discussion

The Draft EIS/EIR was made available at on the Internet and copies of the DEIS are available in CD or printed format. Copies ordered are expected to arrive within 2 weeks. The closing date on public comment was extended to December 20, 1999.

A questions and answers guide was provided that answered questions that pertained to the purpose of the project, the preferred alternative and general questions about the dam on the Trinity River, impacted fisheries and Central Valley Water Project. The handout was short, clear and informative.

All public comments were addressed to a panel of representatives from the co-lead agencies. These agencies included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and Trinity County. The meeting began on schedule. Robert Ruesink, of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho, presided as the hearing officer. The purpose of the meeting as stated by Mr. Ruesink was to receive comments from the public. People who wished to comment were required to register at the front desk. Each person was called and asked to state their name and affiliated organization. The public meeting was solely to receive comments on the draft EIS/EIR. The agencies would not respond to any questions or concerns during the meeting.

All members of the panel were attentive throughout the public commenting period. However, restlessness was apparent in the body language of Bruce Holmstead and Robert Ruesink. I interpreted this attitude to be a result of the panel not being able to respond to the issues being brought forth. The other panel members were more receptive to the comments. The representative from the Bureau of Reclamation, Russ Smith, took notes throughout the meeting and the representative of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and Trinity Co. Planning Dept. listened carefully.

Issues and views that were commented on during the public meeting included:

1. The public felt the proposed alternative was the most desirable of those listed, but removal of the dam would be most desirable.
2. Flows estimated for whitewater canoeing and kayaking would not be limited by increased flows in the dam. The optimal minimum flow numbers used for whitewater recreation were incorrect. Optimal flows would be higher.
3. The Hoopa Valley Tribe would be positively affected economically and culturally by increasing the flows in the Trinity River.
4. Extension of the deadline would not be beneficial. The process needs to continue in a timely manner.
5. The predator problem at the mouth of the Klamath River need to be addressed.
6. Restoration the fisheries in the Trinity River would not be successful without addressing the Klamath River fisheries as well.
7. Any diversion of water from the Trinity River is in violation of the Endangered Species Act

There were no comments from the public regarding the negative economic impacts resulting from the loss of water to the Central Valley Water Project. The meeting ended an hour early since all persons that had registered to comment had spoken.

Conclusions

The public meeting allowed a forum for the public to make comments. However, this type of meeting did not foster communication between the panel and the public. All of the public comments reflected an attitude that the more water released to the Trinity River the better.