



## **AGENCIES RELEASE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENEWAL OF COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY WITH CANADA**

Posted on Friday, June 28, 2013 (PST)

The U.S. "Entity" -- the Bonneville Power Administration administrator and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Northwest Division commander/division engineer -- announced Thursday the release of a draft recommendation for renewal of the Columbia River Treaty with Canada regarding flood control, hydro power, fish and wildlife and other issues that span the Columbia River basin the two countries share.

The recommendation development is part of a process to renew and/or amend a treaty first signed in 1961 and implemented in 1964. The Columbia River Treaty is an international agreement between Canada and the United States that called for the cooperative development of water resources regulation in the upper Columbia River basin.

A main component of the treaty called for Canada to develop reservoirs in the higher reaches of the Columbia Basin sufficient to provide 15.5 million acre-feet of water storage to help boost flood control capabilities and provide a controllable source to fuel hydro production in both countries. It has resulted in doubled water storage capacity on the Columbia system with construction of three large storage projects (Duncan, Keenleyside and Mica) in Canada and Libby Dam in the United States.

Under the terms of the treaty, requirements for flood control provided by the treaty projects will change in 2024 from the current pre-determined operation plan to a "called upon" provision wherein the United States may request flood control assistance from Canadian projects. The hitch is that flood control help can only be called upon if needs cannot be met by all related flood control facilities in the United States.

If the United States uses the called upon option, it must then pay Canada for its operating expenses and economic losses due to flood control operation.

The draft document released by the U.S. Entity is a result of a multi-year, collaborative process between the U.S. Entity, Sovereign Review Team and stakeholders.

For the purpose of sending this working draft out to stakeholders, the U.S. Entity says "it should

be understood that, at this point, there is tentative alignment” among the U.S. Entity and Sovereigns on a number of key issues:

-- The Treaty has substantial benefits for both the U.S. and Canada, but it should be modernized to reflect the current values and priorities of the Pacific Northwest region.

-- A modernized Treaty will be flexible and resilient enough to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other factors.

-- Ecosystem-based functions will be integrated into the Columbia River Treaty as a third primary purpose, or benefit, in the same way that hydropower and flood risk management benefits were developed in the original Treaty.

-- A number of Treaty modifications are needed to improve ecosystem function, including augmentation of stream flows in spring and summer, a dry year strategy, and discussions with Canada on the feasibility of restoring fish passage on the main stem Columbia.

-- The coordinated power benefits should be reasonably and fairly balanced between the U.S. and Canada and this should be reflected in the calculation of the Canadian Entitlement return.

-- Continued flood risk management is an important component to protect public safety and the region’s economy.

-- Important river uses such as navigation and recreation should not be negatively impacted by Treaty operations.

There are also key areas where agreement is yet to be achieved, says the U.S. Entity. More discussion and input will be necessary to achieve alignment in these areas, it says, which include, but are not limited to:

-- The correct balance for the use of any additional water supplies for both ecosystem flows and consumptive use through a modernized treaty remains a significant issue. Some Sovereigns, including the four Pacific Northwest states and several federal agencies, propose that a process be established whereby the states, tribes, and stakeholders will determine how the

allocation of any additional spring/summer water from Canada will occur, while the Tribal perspective is that ecosystem needs and tribal reserved water rights must be fully met before any consideration is given to any additional out-of-stream uses.

-- Columbia Basin Tribes and others have stated that achieving ecosystem-based functions such as stable reservoirs and additional downstream flows requires a modification to current flood risk management practices. Other Sovereigns have proposed that the current level of flood risk must be sustained unless modified by a formal public process. Therefore, the U.S. Entity has identified a post-2013 process to examine the level of flood risk management throughout the Basin. The U.S. Entity's position is that such an analysis cannot take place without more comprehensive involvement from a wider array of stakeholders, and that additional funding would be required to implement this process.

-- Columbia Basin Tribes and others continue discussing the degree and extent to which both Canadian and U.S. hydropower production should be reduced or traded-off in order to provide increased ecosystem-based function. The U.S. Entity maintains that reductions in hydropower production would also result in reductions in system reliability. Columbia Basin Tribes think that reliability issues can be addressed through the integration of renewables and increased conservation measures.

-- How future treaty operations will balance ecosystem-based function, flood risk management, and hydropower with other authorized purposes.

-- How regional sovereigns will continue to participate in the treaty modernization process after the recommendation is delivered to the State Department, as well as post-2024 treaty governance structures.

For more information go to the U.S. Entity cover letter:

<http://www.crt2014-2024review.gov/Files/US%20Entity%20cover%20letter,%20June%2027%202013.pdf>

The CRTR working draft recommendation:

<http://www.crt2014-2024review.gov/Files/CRTR%20working%20draft%20recommendation,%20June%2027%202013.pdf>

The treaty development schedule can be found at:

<http://www.crt2014-2024review.gov/Files/Treaty%20Review%20process%20timeline,%20Final,%20June%2025%202013.pdf>

Comments on the draft U.S. entity draft recommendations are required by Aug. 16 to help refine the proposal. The U.S. Entity will post all comments received during this review period to the Treaty Review website.

