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Kimberly D. Bose Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 1st Street N.E. Room 1A
Washington, D.C. 20428

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Subject: Action Required to Save Lake Almanor Grebes

Dear FERC Commissioners,

I am writing out of concern for one of the largest breeding colonies of Western and Clark's Grebes, which are currently listed as "Climate Endangered" birds. The proposed solution is to not engage in water drawdowns of Lake Almanor during the months of July and August.

Lake Almanor grebes, along with Eagle Lake and Clear Lake, comprise more than 90 percent of breeding grebes in California and 45% in the intermountain west, due largely to the drying up of natural formations due to climate change and diversions. Yet the periodic drawdowns of water at Lake Almanor are now threatening one of their last habitats. The Plumas Audubon "Grebe Conservation Project: Breeding Success Linked to Water Management at Lake Almanor" show the cause of endangerment to be the lowering of water levels by PG&E during July and August.

Grebe nests are tethered to grass that lies beneath a minimum of 6 inches of water, to avoid the predation of eggs by predators. Water drawdowns disrupt this requirement, causing adults to abandon nests once minimum water levels are not maintained, resulting in the loss of grebe eggs. As an example, in 2018, a count of 1,205 active nests made in July and August, were abandoned by August 20. Only three chicks out of a population of 3,485 adults survived that year and no chicks appeared to survive the 2019 breeding season.

July and August are the critical months for grebe breeding. In 2016, PG&E and Plumas Audubon entered into a tentative agreement to limit the drawdown of water from July 1 to Aug. 31 to not interrupt the breeding cycle of grebes. Unfortunately, PG&E did not adhere to that agreement.

We are at a critical point of management for these Climate Endangered birds. We only need to limit drawdown of water during the months of July and August to save their population. A permanent agreement to not engage in water drawdowns in these two months is urgently needed. Please consider and advocate for this critical action to save the grebes.

Sincerely,

Shay Weisbrich

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