

# **Hoopa Valley Tribal Council**

**Hoopa Valley Tribe**

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**HOOPA VALLEY TRIBE**

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## **Interior Secretary Haaland Strikes Blow for California Environmental Restoration Exposes Trump Administration Financial Scandal in Bureau of Reclamation**

The Hoopa Valley Tribe hails Secretary Deb Haaland's long-sought decision to revoke her predecessor's final assault on tribal trust resources and environmental justice.

On January 19, the day before President Biden's inauguration, then-Secretary Bernhardt declared that environmental restoration of areas in California damaged by construction and operation of the government's massive Central Valley Project had been completed. That decision would have reduced or eliminated hundreds of millions of dollars in environmental restoration costs that the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act required water and power contracts for CVP water to pay in exchange for the billions of dollars they have reaped from government-subsidized water and power supplies.

"This is such welcome news," said Hoopa Vice-Chairman Everett Colegrove. "We understand the vast responsibilities of the Secretary's office, and the time it took for her to deal with this issue, which is so important to us."

"The CVP has devastated the Trinity River basin and the fishery we have relied on since time immemorial," said Hoopa Fisheries Director Michael Orcutt. "For Secretary Bernhardt's decision to have stood would have made a mockery of Secretary Haaland's commitment to environmental justice, tribal property rights, her trust responsibilities, and duty to protect the federal Treasury," he added.

The Secretary's decision has exposed a deeper financial scandal that Hoopa has brought to the Secretary's attention, the Trump Administration's unlawful action to reassign to the Federal taxpayer at least \$400 million that Federal law required to be paid by CVP contractors who were Mr. Bernhardt's clients before and after his tenure as Secretary.

“Secretary Haaland has acted just in the nick of time, but there is more she needs to do. The sweetheart deals negotiated during the Trump Administration for CVP contracts are not yet binding on the United States and need to be revised to protect the Hupa people and the Federal treasury,” said Orcutt.

“We need the Secretary to act now to protect our future. We want Secretary Haaland to take every action within her authority to ensure that a future Secretary will know he cannot dishonor the federal trust responsibility and our property rights,” said Vice-Chairman Colegrove.