



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

729 N.E. Oregon, Suite 200, Portland, Oregon 97232 Telephone (503) 238-0667

Fax (503) 235-4228

Testimony for DEQ Hearing on Oregon's Revised Standards for Toxic Water Pollutants

Good afternoon. My name is Laura Gephart and I have lived in Multnomah County for ten years. I am the Watershed Programs Coordinator for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) and want to thank you for the opportunity to show my support for Oregon's DEQ's proposed water quality standard revisions based on a fish consumption rate of 175 grams per day. By increasing the fish consumption rate, the levels of toxic pollution that are considered "allowable" in our rivers, lakes and streams will be decreased and benefit the ecosystem function as a whole and the health of all Oregonians.

CRITFC was created in 1977 by the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe to ensure a unified voice in the overall management of the fishery resources, and as managers, to protect reserved treaty rights through the exercise of the inherent sovereign powers of the tribes.

Of course fish health is extremely important to all Oregonians but it is especially important to the tribes. This cannot be overstated for the fishery resource is not only a major food source for tribal members'; it is also an integral part of their cultural, economic, and spiritual well-being. As ceremonial and subsistence fishers, the tribes rely on the protection and enhancement of water quality to a level that is sufficient to protect the water and fish from harmful exposure to waterborne pollutants.

The current estimated fish consumption rate being used by Oregon is not sufficient to protect Oregonians that eat healthy amounts of fish from our local rivers, lakes, and streams.

I urge the DEQ to adopt these new standards that will allow all Oregonians to enjoy the benefits of living in a land whose waters are protected from toxic pollutants. Thank you.

Laura Gephart

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CRITFC-Gephart