

Testimony – DEQ Hearing on Oregon’s Revised Standards for Toxic Water Pollutants
March 7, 2011

- Good evening. My name is Donnie Winishut and I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. I am also a member of the Warm Springs Fish and Wildlife Committee.
- On behalf of myself and the 5,000 registered members of the tribe, I urge the DEQ to adopt the proposed human health criteria for water quality based on a fish consumption rate of 175 grams per day.
- The 175 grams per day fish consumption rate is based in part on a comprehensive survey of the ceremonial and subsistence consumption habits on the Warm Springs Reservation along with that of other members of the Columbia River Tribes.
- This study proves that the consumption of twenty-three 8-oz servings of fish meals per month is a realistic value that represents the fish consumption habits of our people.
- For too long, rather than imposing stricter quality standards for the waterway, state agencies have recommended that tribal people eat less fish. What needs to be understood is that fish is not only a major source of food for tribal members, it is also an integral part of our cultural, economic, and spiritual well-being.
- The tribes signed treaties in 1855 that ceded millions of acres of land in order to retain our rights to take fish, hunt, and gather roots & berries at all usual and accustomed areas, thereby protecting our way of life in perpetuity. These treaty protected rights are being threatened if our fish and the waterways they reside in are contaminated.
- As ceremonial and subsistence fishers, we rely on water quality standards that are protective of the health and livelihood of our people.
- We all share the responsibility to protect this water resource that is so important to our people. We must restore the health of the water, to protect our own health.
- I urge the DEQ to adopt standards that are based on these reasonable and reliable measures of fish consumption in Oregon.
- Thank you for the opportunity to express the views of the Warm Springs Tribes.