

## Testimony – DEQ Hearing on Oregon’s Revised Standards for Toxic Water Pollutants

March 7, 2011

- Good evening. My name is Wilbur Slockish and I am a member of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.
- On behalf of myself and the over 10,000 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.
- As ceremonial, commercial, and subsistence fishers, we have a cultural tradition of protecting our natural resources and we support all efforts to improve water quality to a level sufficient to protect the fishery, drinking water, and environmental impacts.
- We will not accept any idea of an alternative food source. Oftentimes we consume more than 175 grams per day.
- Twenty years ago, we participated in the CRITFC survey that documented the fact that tribal people were not protected by the fish consumption rate used by Oregon to calculate acceptable levels of toxic chemicals in the state’s surface waters. Since that time we have waited for the state to take action on these findings and to protect the health of tribal members and many others who regularly eat fish.
- Any further delay in setting water quality standards at a level that is needed to safeguard the health of tribal members and all Oregonians that eat fish from local waters is unacceptable.
- We must take steps to protect the fish and the water that is so important to our people. For the benefit of future generations, we are obligated to do whatever we can to restore the health of our water resources.
- I urge the DEQ to adopt these standards and take this long overdue step that will begin to protect all people who enjoy the benefits of living in a land whose waters are protected from toxic pollutants.
- Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this ruling.