

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

My name is Bruce Jim and I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, a member of the Fish & Wildlife Committee, as well as the Chair of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I wish to express my support for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality proposal to revise state water quality standards based on a fish consumption rate of 175 grams per day. Increasing the Fish Consumption Rate that is recognized by the state of Oregon will result in decreasing the levels of toxic pollution that are considered "allowable" in our rivers, lakes, and streams.

The proposed 175 grams per day fish consumption rate is based in part on a comprehensive study of the ceremonial and subsistence consumption habits of the Warm Springs tribal members along with other members of the Columbia River Tribes. Results from the study prove 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. The importance of fish to the tribes cannot be overstated for the fishery resource is not only a major food source for tribal members'; it is also an integral part of our cultural, economic, and spiritual well-being.

As ceremonial and subsistence fishers, we rely on the protection and enhancement of water quality to a level that is sufficient to protect our water and fish from harmful exposure to waterborne pollutants. The documented degradation of water quality in the Columbia River Basin has heightened our concern for the fishery resource and the health and livelihood of our tribal members. Current national estimated fish consumption rates are simply not sufficient to protect tribal peoples residing in the Columbia River Basin or other people that consume healthy amounts of fish. I urge the DEQ to adopt standards that are based on these proposed reasonable and reliable measures of fish consumption by the residents of Oregon.

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