Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Council. My name is Terry Courtney, Jr. I am a member of the Fish and Wildlife Committee of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. I am here today to present comments on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

The Columbia River tribes have had time to make a quick review of the analysis of the options by the Salmon Technical Team. The options that the council adopt today for public review need to reflect the status of the stocks. Columbia River tule hatchery fall chinook, one of the main contributors to PFMC fisheries, are expected to be at low levels again. The low return of Spring Creek Hatchery fish will likely cause management problems this fall for Columbia River fisheries. The tribes need to have the flexibility to achieve the harvestable share entitled under case law.

The impact level on Snake River fall chinook is important to the tribes because it is one of the controlling stocks for Columbia River management and it is on the Endangered Species list. The forecast for the return of Snake River wild fall chinook is not yet available, but should be available by the April meeting. The Snake River wild fall
The chinook index is also not yet available. The options considered by the Council must be consistent with ESA guidelines for Snake River wild fall chinook. If any of the options fail to meet the Snake River fall chinook guidelines, then the Council can not consider that option for final adoption in April.

The tribes expect the states to manage coho fisheries to pass 50% of the upriver Columbia River coho to Bonneville Dam in accordance with management agreements. The mortalities of Upper Columbia River coho in ocean fisheries must be balanced with the mortalities in inside fisheries in order to meet this obligation. It is difficult to assess the effect of the ocean options without a better understanding of the full package of ocean and inside fisheries, including the effect of selective fisheries on natural stock returns. We will be working with the state and federal agencies to clarify the situation between now and the Council’s meeting in April.

Conservation principles must be applied to every part of the life cycle, not just in harvest. Even though the Council has little control over activities other than fisheries, a number of the voting members represent agencies which do have the ability to make improvements in other areas. The Columbia River tribes are willing to work with whoever it takes to make improvements in the salmon runs on which we depend for our cultural existence, because the status quo is not acceptable.
To restore salmon stocks, we must make improvements in habitat conservation and restoration and in water use. The tribes believe the responsible use of hatcheries as supplementation tools is essential to rebuilding wild salmon stocks. Funding must be made available to implement innovative supplementation programs. In the Columbia River, we must find a way to safely pass fish through the hydropower system. Today is the anniversary of the flooding of the treaty fishery at the Celilo Falls by The Dalles Dam, a tremendous loss for the Columbia River tribes. The tribes believe that the science is clear that the most likely way to restore Snake River salmon stocks is to breach the Lower Snake River dams. Others such as Governor Kitzhaber and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also support breaching. Without actions in other areas to restore salmon stocks, restrictive fishery management will become the status quo and that is not acceptable.

It appears that the options being considered by the Council provide an adequate range to send out for public review. However, we must be able to look at the results for the Snake River wild fall chinook harvest index and at the impacts on all stocks for the full package of fisheries before endorsing any option for final adoption.

This concludes my statement. Thank You.