

**TESTIMONY OF
THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY TRIBES
BEFORE PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
MARCH 12, 2009
SeaTac, Washington**

Good day Mr. Chairman and members of the Council. My name is Bruce Jim. I am a member of the Fish and Wildlife Committee of the Warm Springs Tribes. I am here to provide Testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

The Columbia River tribes are co-managers of the salmon resources in the Columbia River. We are very displeased with the way mark selective fisheries are being pushed through this year. We do not think that the model inputs and the in-river model have been prepared and reviewed in a timely manner. The tribes do not feel that the states are living up to their responsibilities as co-managers.

The marked and unmarked estimates of Columbia River Chinook stocks used as inputs in ocean and in-river models were developed by WDFW staff. They are not jointly developed estimates done by the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee and the Columbia River tribes will not accept them as valid unless and until they are reviewed and adopted by the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee.

Because of this problem, the Columbia River tribes do not accept the estimated impacts on Columbia River Chinook reported by the STT for Option 1. The tribes consider these numbers to be no more useful than if they had simply been made up without any basis. It is not appropriate for any agency to unilaterally produce such critical model inputs.

Additionally, the tribes received a copy on Tuesday of an in-river model that attempts to analyze a mark selective fishery at Buoy 10. The *U.S. v. Oregon* TAC has neither reviewed nor adopted this model for use. The tribes do not consider it valid at this time. The model uses a 16% release mortality rate at Buoy 10. The states have not presented any justification to the tribes as to why this is an appropriate rate and the tribes do not accept it especially considering the possibilities of multiple encounters in the Area 1 and 2 fisheries.

If the states want to propose new selective fisheries in the Columbia River during either the summer or fall management periods, they should do research first to determine appropriate release mortality rates.

The states have also not presented the tribes with a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Buoy 10 fishery that includes on the water monitoring to determine actual mark rates and actual numbers of released fish. Nor have the states provided us with any information as

to how they will report actual impacts in ocean mark selective fisheries prior to the beginning of in-river fisheries.

Sports fishermen have opportunities to fish in the ocean, in-river, and again in tributaries. There is no reason why so much fishing effort needs to be focused in the Columbia River mouth. Many other river mouths are closed fishing areas to protect fish aggregating in these areas. If Oregon were to place reasonable limits on the number of fishing guide licenses, the Buoy 10 fishery would be much easier to manage and there would be less pressure for mark selective fisheries there.

The tribes may be the only people speaking publicly against mark selective fisheries, but there are other non-tribal fishermen who do not support this proposal.

In conclusion, the tribes recognize the difficulty of planning ocean fisheries and realize that in 2009, some people will have to forego some of their hoped for fishing opportunity. The tribes were forced to make due with very minimal spring and summer fishing opportunity for decades. But if we continue to work together, we can restore fish runs to healthy levels so everyone can fish.

Finally, the Columbia River tribes strongly recommend that Option 1 be immediately dropped from further consideration.

Thank you