

**TESTIMONY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY TRIBES
BEFORE PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

April 9, 2014, Vancouver, WA

Good day members of the Council. My name is Bruce Jim Sr. I am a member of the Fish and Wildlife committee of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. I am here again with Johnny Jackson who is a member of the Yakama Nation, a Commissioner for CRITFC and also a treaty fisherman on the Columbia. We are here to provide testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

We had a good meeting yesterday with Oregon and Washington. It will be good to continue these types of meetings as it gives us a chance to discuss a wide variety of topics in a less formal setting.

We also appreciate the turn out for our presentation on avian predation on Sunday. There was a good discussion among the participants about the importance of this issue. Addressing avian predation may be one of the most cost effective things we can do to improve salmon and steelhead returns. People debate exactly how much is spent both on salmon recovery but also on the general production of Columbia Basin fish for harvest in ocean and in-river fisheries. It is clearly many hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Because nesting birds in the estuary have eaten over 80 million juvenile salmon and steelhead in the last four years, avian predation is causing enormous costs to tax payers and rate payers as well as doing biological damage to wild fish populations. Both hatchery and wild fish are consumed at high rates. The estimate of the loss of over 80 million juvenile fish in the last four years is a very minimal estimate and only because it only considers birds during the nesting season. It does not include predation from non-nesting birds and does not include predation outside the brief nesting period. It also does not include predation by cormorants, terns, gulls and pelicans clear up into the tributaries even up in Idaho. If these 80 million fish in the estuary were to have survived at even a low rate of 1%, we would have had an average of 200,000 additional adults per year. This is a real financial cost to fishermen as well as a biological cost to the fish.

The solutions to bird predation can be on several levels. The simplest fixes which should be included in any baseline management system are things like building perches around nesting areas for eagles, hawks, and owls to facilitate predation on bird colonies. Needed actions also include removing rip rap around East Sand Island to allow periodic flooding. We should do what we can to help habitat in the estuary function like an estuary and reduce benefits for terns and cormorants. There are other efforts in play currently to move some tern colonies and one place that terns may be moved to is the south end of San Francisco Bay. While this may provide some relief to the Columbia, we need to make sure we are not simply exporting problems to our neighbors. We think there is a need to simply reduce the numbers of terns and cormorants. Egg oiling can be used to reduce breeding success, and actively killing birds will need to be considered. We do not have the luxury of not managing birds to try to keep them in balance with our fish populations. Avian predation is man-made problem that can be fixed. In other parts of the country, problem cormorants

can be killed, but for some reason people seem reluctant to do what needs to be done in the Columbia Basin.

We would also like to raise some concerns about threats to our hatchery production. Besides threats of litigation by anti-fishing groups, we are concerned about budget threats to the Mitchell Act hatchery programs. We are concerned that the National Marine Fisheries Service is not supporting full funding of the Mitchell Act program. The United States needs to should make good on their mitigation obligations. Justice Hugo Black once said "Great nations, like great men should keep their promises." A failure to fully fund the Mitchell Act hatcheries will have adverse consequences to all of our fisheries. While the Congressionally approved FY 14 budget had a small reduction in Operations and Maintenance, we understand that the Department of Commerce has changed policy to apply administrative costs to all accounts. In the past the Mitchell Act account was not charged administrative costs. The consequence of that change is that Operations and Maintenance now has a 7.8% reduction from the FY 13 level, which equates to about \$800,000. We are very concerned about what the effects of this funding reduction will be not only on production the Federal Government committed to support in the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement, but on other production and on all the fisheries dependent on this production.

Establishing fisheries that provide reasonable and fair fishing opportunity for everyone is challenging enough, but when the Federal Government does things like fail to address avian predators or fail to support hatchery programs that were promised to address the development of the basin, it becomes even more difficult to achieve our fishery objectives.

For the ocean fisheries, we expect the states and federal government to ensure that the ocean fisheries will properly account for impacts to upper Columbia summer chinook as part of the total non-treaty catch and that the impacts to upriver fall chinook will be controlled to keep the total non-treaty catches to less than 50% of the harvestable surplus. It is also necessary to ensure that 50% of the upriver coho reach Bonneville Dam.

This concludes our statement. Thank You.