

HOOPA VALLEY TRIBE TESTIMONY OF FORT BRAGG MARCH 15, 2006
COMMERCIAL FISHERY OPENING

- (1) My name is Mike Orcutt, I am the Fisheries Director for Hoopa Tribal Fisheries. The Hoopa Valley Tribe (Tribe) thanks the Council for this opportunity to comment regarding the **Fort Bragg, 15 March 2006 Commercial Fishery Opening and other related spring-time marine fisheries.**
- (2) The Tribe has always avoided making recommendations affecting the harvest allocation of non-tribal fisheries that encounter Klamath Chinook. We recognize that Klamath Chinook contribute to non-tribal fisheries from Cape Falcon to Pt. Sur. However, there is limited knowledge on Klamath contributions because of either the historic absence of such fisheries, or the limited effort exhibited in past fisheries during this time frame in areas of interest.
- (3) The Tribe is very appreciative of the strong alliances we have forged with those prosecuting non-tribal fisheries both in the ocean and river. The significance of this alliance to the prospects for successful restoration of Klamath Basin can not be overstated.
- (4) Unfortunately, today, those dependent on Klamath Chinook are faced with a difficult choice over conservation and the prospects for near-term gain. As most are aware, the abundance of Klamath fall Chinook is greatly depressed. Managers are searching for balance between conservation and opportunity. Most likely, management response will be measured and lead to historic reductions in all fisheries.
- (5) The marine fishery of fall 2005 has already harvested in excess of 6,000 Klamath fall Chinook. One aspect of these late season fisheries is that their impact is not evaluated in advance. As it turns out in 2006, even absent this impact, the abundance of Klamath fall Chinook would have not provided sufficient natural spawners to meet FMP objectives. With the added fall 2005 impacts, escapement is significantly below the management standard.
- (6) In conclusion, the Tribe can not support the concept of spring season fisheries in marine areas. The limited knowledge on contributions of Klamath Chinook in March and April off the coast of Fort Bragg raises serious doubt on the ability to accurately anticipate further impacts on this already depressed stock. Other spring fisheries operating since February 2006 are of similar concern.