

**TESTIMONY OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY TRIBES
BEFORE PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
April 11, 2015, Rohnert Park, CA**

Good day members of o Council. My name is Wilbur Slockish, Jr. I am a Klickitat fisherman on the Columbia River enrolled in the Yakama Nation. I am here with Ryan Smith from Warm Springs to provide testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

We have several items we would like to bring to the attention of the Council.

We are concerned about the lack of agreement among the PSC Chinook Technical Committee (CTC) regarding the Chinook model calibration for this year. We understand that there may be no technical agreement for a few more weeks. In the mean-time, we suggest that the results from the preliminary calibration done by the CTC be used. We appreciate that Bob Turner sent a letter to ADFG reminding them of the importance of the Chinook Stipulation Order in *Yakama v. Baldrige*. The allocation of fishery impacts should not adversely impact tribal fisheries. Increasing harvest in northern fisheries is not appropriate given the status of many stocks in the Pacific Northwest. We need to focus on rebuilding instead of trying to always increase harvest.

We would also like to address some issues related to lower Columbia River fisheries that have a bearing on ocean fishery management because of the fact that lower river tule and lower river coho impacts are shared between the ocean and in-river fisheries. We have previously stated our concerns with mark selective fisheries in the ocean, lower Columbia, and at Buoy 10. Mark selective fisheries have not rebuilt any stocks. With so many mark selective fisheries now, wild fish can be handled and stressed over and over which may be increasing mortality on wild fish.

We have stated specific concerns related to new mark selective seine fisheries in the Columbia. While the *U.S. v. Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has recently reached a consensus recommendation regarding release mortality rates for these fisheries, we are quite disappointed that we have still not received the requested final data from the three year research study on release mortality rates, nor have we received final reports from the “research” fishery that was conducted last fall. Without this information, it makes it very difficult to assess the likely impacts from proposed fisheries for this year. We note that in the lower river chinook model, the states are using harvest rates from past gillnet fisheries to model seine fisheries. We would think that utilizing the data collected in past seine fishing would be important to most accurately model fisheries. We think that the approach the states are taking to plan seine fishing will produce a great deal of uncertainty in expected impacts.

While mark selective seine fisheries are not needed or appropriate for the lower Columbia, if the states do choose to implement them, we want to see rigorous monitoring of this new fishery to ensure that the impacts are within modeled levels. We think that genetic sampling of any seine fisheries this fall will be important to get better data on impacts to upriver fish.

We are very concerned that with the likely very low flows and warm water this year, that any mark selective fishing either sport or commercial will be a very bad idea. There is good evidence that temperature may produce higher release mortality in mark selective fisheries. The low clip rate for

chinook in the Columbia River also makes mark selective fishing in the Columbia impractical.

Part of the incentive for the states to implement mark selective fisheries in the fall is simply the lack of real progress in recovering wild lower river tules. For decades the tribal approach has been a gravel to gravel management, which means we work to try to increase survival and productivity at all life stages. We also view hatchery supplementation as an appropriate tool to help in recovery efforts. Given some of the progress we have seen in rebuilding upriver stocks, we think this approach would be good to try for lower river tules. Depending on mark selective fisheries is no way to recover fish.

We plan on continuing to carefully review the proposed ocean fisheries to ensure that the modeled impacts on upriver chinook and coho stocks comply with the harvest and allocation limits under the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement. We will likely have more comments on these proposed fisheries at a later time.

This concludes our statement. Thank You.