

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

April 14, 2015, Rohnert Park, CA

Good day members of the Council. My name is Wilbur Slockish Jr. I am here again with Ryan Smith. We are here to provide testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce tribes.

The tribes want to make sure that the Federal Court case agreements are followed to assure the Columbia River coho and chinook stocks return for the future and are available for the tribal share of harvest. We are focused not only on the fair sharing of harvest, but we are especially focused on the need to fully recover Columbia basin salmon for future generations.

As the planning process for 2015 ocean fisheries concludes, the Columbia River Tribes urge caution in the management of this year's ocean fisheries. We are concerned that this year's environmental conditions will probably have unanticipated effects on salmon. Warm water off our coast and in the Gulf of Alaska, could be very bad for our fish. There may easily be changes in migration patterns or changes in survival that may produce unexpected effects for fisheries and run sizes returning to the rivers.

We need to ensure that fisheries are adequately monitored and evaluated to be able to fully understand any changes in fisheries. Collecting and analyzing both CWT and genetic data and producing timely reports from ocean fisheries is important. Genetic data can help support our existing CWT data. We need to make sure that programs are adequately funded to analyze and report genetic data collected from fisheries.

We remind the Council that mark selective fisheries produce a large amount of uncertainty about what the real impacts are on unclipped wild fish. Releasing fish in warmer water, may increase the mortality to wild fish. Fish handled and released in ocean mark selective fisheries will be returning to warm low rivers where they may be handled again in in-river mark selective fisheries.

Columbia River fisheries are managed based on the actual run sizes and not simply on pre-season forecasts. If the natural survival of fish is less than expected or if fisheries catch more fish than planned, in-river fisheries will pay the cost. We also need to keep working together to make sure fishery impacts are shared fairly between northern fisheries, local ocean fisheries and in-river fisheries. Caution in ocean fishery management is important to ensure more terminal fisheries can access a fair share of the fish and that escapement needs are met.

We would also like to raise an issue specific to Columbia upriver coho. The *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement requires that 50% of these coho be passed to Bonneville Dam and made available to tribal fisheries. The methods by which ocean and lower Columbia River impacts to upriver coho are calculated are not well documented and impacts are not reported clearly. We think that the methods for these calculations need to be better documented. We also suggest that the STT include in its reports as specific table showing the adult equivalent (AEQ) mortality in PFMC fisheries for not only upriver coho, but the upriver chinook stocks as well. We can get this information from the STT currently, but including the information in STT reports will aid the tribes

in reviewing the impacts of ocean fisheries on our stocks. Clarity in reporting impacts to Columbia River stocks will help everyone be assured that management agreements are being upheld.

Earlier in the week, during the discussion of chinook bycatch in the whiting and other groundfish fisheries. We agreed with comments indicating that we need to see more detail in the total impacts and stock composition of this catch on a more timely basis. A thorough understanding of the impacts to both listed fish and Columbia upriver stocks subject to treaty non/treaty sharing is important. One issue that was not raised earlier in the week is that we view fishery impacts to any of our Columbia River stocks as subject to sharing regardless if the fishery is a targeted salmon fishery or some other fishery. Impacts to Columbia River stocks caught in non-treaty groundfish fisheries needs to be counted as part of the states 50% harvest share.

This concludes our statement. Thank You.