



The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

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Marc Gorelnik, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Chairman Gorelnik:

The purpose of this letter is to further discuss the proposed letter supporting reintroduction of salmon to the blocked areas above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to discuss this important project with the PFMC. As you know, the construction of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams eliminated salmon runs to a large proportion of their traditional habitat and many important fishing sites for the tribes in our region.

In 2019, the small pre-season forecast combined with the largest pre-season ocean fishing options resulted in a negative harvest allocation for the Colville Tribes. This prompted the Colville Tribes to engage in the PFMC process. Since that time, my staff and I have maintained a solution-oriented approach with the Council, your committees and your staff. We believe that the best solution to meeting the harvest needs of the Upper Columbia tribes is to generate more fish for everyone. We understand that the PFMC does not typically review and support individual projects, and we appreciate the PFMC's time and attention on this important matter.


In September of 2020, the Colville Tribes presented and update on salmon passage and reintroduction into the blocked area of the Upper Columbia to the PFMC. The Colville tribes requested a letter of support from the PFMC for the salmon reintroduction work. The discussion and dialogue from the PFMC commissioners following the presentation was generally supportive of the effort, but also respectful of the many stakeholders and complicated processes in the Columbia River. There is no doubt that the pathway to salmon restoration in the blocked area of the Upper Columbia is complicated. It is a difficult problem with challenging solutions; and that is the very reason for establishing a Phased approach that emphasizes testing feasibility before proposing large, complex and expensive implementation. Broad understanding and support for the project will be essential to its implementation, which is why we are reaching out to stakeholders beyond the Upper Columbia that will also benefit from this project.

The Colville Tribes and our partners at UCUT have completed the Phase 1 report which, as you saw in the presentation in September 2020, concluded that the results from the initial evaluations were encouraging enough that we should move into Phase 2 and begin testing the feasibility with experimental releases. The results of Phase 2 feasibility testing and interim passage facilities will feed an adaptive management process that will inform stakeholders of the costs and benefits of moving to Phase 3, the construction of permanent facilities. It is important to keep in mind that offering support for the reintroduction effort at this time simply means that you support

gathering scientific information to inform management decisions within the adaptive management framework of the Phased approach.

I have read the draft letter of support from Chuck Tracy (E.2.Attachment 4) and believe that it captured the sentiment of the discussion and is a good starting point for documenting the PFMC's support for this project. I would like you to consider some additional language that captures the potential benefits of the project for enhancing the summer Chinook run size and the respective harvest opportunity throughout the ocean and Columbia River fisheries. Additionally, our stakeholder outreach and support efforts would be enhanced if the letter from the PFMC directly addressed the need for feasibility testing with experimental releases consistent with the phased approach to fish passage and reintroduction upstream of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams.

Sincerely,



Rodney Cawston