

**Testimony on Behalf of the Columbia River Treaty Tribes
before the Pacific Fishery Management Council
March 14, 2022**

Good day members of the Council,

My name is James Marsh. I am a member of the Umatilla Fish and Wildlife Committee, a CRITFC Commissioner and a treaty fisher on the Columbia River. I have been asked to present this statement on behalf of the four Columbia River tribes with federally recognized treaty fishing rights; the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and Nez Perce Tribe. Our tribes have had and continue to have vital cultural, social, and economic needs for salmon. Salmon are critical as part of our First Foods.

As the Council develops its options for 2022 ocean salmon fisheries, we would like to remind it of the enormous work the tribes do to support salmon recovery efforts. We do not support salmon recovery just so that fisheries can increase. We support salmon recovery as the key to maintaining our culture and way of life, preserving traditional ecological knowledge, and supporting functioning ecosystems. There has been an enormous reduction in habitat accessible to salmon in the Columbia Basin. Roughly 45 percent of historic habitat is still accessible to salmon and the large majority of that habitat is within our Tribes' ceded areas. Therefore, the tribes co-manage much of the recovery effort within the basin.

Tribes have often led the way in the utilization of hatcheries as a salmon recovery tool. Both re-introduction and supplementation are important uses for hatcheries. The tribes have been leaders in helping develop the understanding of how hatcheries can be used as a recovery tool while minimizing any potential risks to natural origin fish.

Our most successful supplementation program is with Snake River fall chinook. It took a great deal of work to begin this program in the 1990s because the states and federal governments were initially very reluctant. Fortunately, this program has evolved into a successful jointly run program between several parties. It has resulted in stable returns of natural origin fall chinook with an average return to Lower Granite Dam in the past five years of almost 7,000 adult fish.

Another key program has been our effort to re-introduce coho. Coho were extirpated in the Umatilla and the Snake Basin and in almost all the Upper Columbia. The tribes developed several programs to restore coho in these areas. These programs have continued to expand with recent re-introductions of coho into the Grande Ronde. Each of these programs have been normally been producing good returns and last year the returns were outstanding. In 2021, the coho counts at each dam upstream of Bonneville were record high adult counts. The coho count at Lower Granite was over 24,000 and at Priest Rapids was almost 48,000. We believe these programs would not exist without tribal efforts.

Without hatcheries, there would be many areas of the Columbia Basin that would simply not have certain species of salmon.

We also note that while the *U.S. v. Oregon* Parties have started programs that increase hatchery production to assist in prey availability for Orcas, we urge that there be more focus on addressing other factors affecting orcas such as water quality and shipping noise.

While we readily take on important roles in recovery efforts, we do not think we should have been burdened with these roles since it was not our actions that drove these salmon populations down.

We look for continued collaboration on many of these programs utilizing hatcheries for recovery, but we also remind people that west coast hatcheries, especially those in the Columbia River, are aging and in need of expensive upgrades and repair. Additionally, many hatchery water supplies are being adversely affected by climate change. It will be critical to work together to find the resources to resolve these issues to give salmon and the fisheries that depend on them a chance.

Regarding the ocean options under consideration, we are continuing to review projected impacts to Columbia River stocks. The harvest restrictions in place due to ESA listings restrict the ability of the tribes to harvest 50% of the harvestable number of fall chinook and coho, but we continue to urge caution in ocean fishery planning to ensure enough fish return to meet tribal fishery needs as well as escaping enough fish to spawn and support future hatchery production.

This concludes our statement.

Thank you.