

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

**March 8, 2019, Vancouver, WA**

Good day members of the Council. My name is Bruce Jim, Sr. I am a member of the Warm Springs Fish and Wildlife Committee and a treaty fisher on the Columbia River. I am here with Wilbur Slockish, James Marsh and Timothy Wheeler to provide testimony on behalf of the four Columbia River treaty tribes: the Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce Tribes.

Water is the giver of all life. A phrase that echoes true in the lives of the tribal people. It is the first thing on the table at all tribal feasts. Salmon, deer, roots, and berries follow in the order in which they offered themselves to the Creator to feed the humans when they were put upon this Earth. Water nourishes the animals and all living things who chose to provide food, clothing, shelter, and tools to our people. We honor each of these things in our ceremonies because each element has its role and purpose in order for us to survive.

The Creator gifted the power of speech to the humans and thus made them responsible as the voice for the animals and plants who chose to provide for them. In turn, people have become neglectful, the voice for the living things has been muted. Our declining salmon runs are now demonstrating this.

Today, we come before you to remind us all that we still have a responsibility to speak for and to take action supporting those things that cannot speak for themselves; our waters, our salmon, all living things.

The Columbia River forecasts are all below average and some of the forecasts are less than half of the ten-year average. Salmon runs are cyclical and poor ocean conditions along with legacies from the poor in-river conditions in 2015 likely remain a key cause. We continue to have concerns about ocean conditions resulting from both man-made and natural factors. While in river fisheries can respond to the actual run sizes, ocean fisheries cannot. Ocean quota levels set too high can have serious impacts on in-river fisheries and the escapement of these runs.

Ocean fisheries need to be set conservatively enough to ensure a reasonable escapement of Columbia upriver fish to meet treaty fishing needs. If the return of Spring Creek tules is too low, it creates difficulty for the treaty fishery to harvest bright stock fish while meeting escapement needs for Spring Creek. In 2018, we also faced bright fall chinook shortfalls at Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery and the Klickitat Fish Hatchery; this will result in reduced production in the years to come.

The Columbia River tribes have worked very hard with our co-managers on efforts to restore and rebuild chinook and coho stocks which are both important to Council fisheries and tribal fisheries. Our restoration successes provide a buffer when times are bad. The result is that our upriver Columbia River stocks continue to be in better shape than many other stocks. However, we must exercise caution when planning fisheries.

We must persist in working together carefully to ensure that all fisheries are planned in such a manner that they do not force the tribal fishery to bear the conservation burden alone.

This concludes the tribal statement.