

TESTIMONY OF EUGENE GREENE, TRIBAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION
JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
Senate Bill 5518

March 13, 2017

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs and members of the Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources. My name is Eugene Austin Greene and I am the Chairman of the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. My testimony today is in favor of Senate Bill 5518, the Department of Environmental Quality Budget with a policy option packages. My tribe is primarily concerned with the Water Quality Budget, which is needed at a higher level than that of the Governor's Budget to ensure protection of our sacred rivers and the salmon brothers who swim upstream to feed us. We agree with the Governor that another \$3 million is needed for spill response and most of it should be in the DEQ budget.

In the tradition given us by the Creator millennia ago, the salmon people are our first food. The health of salmon, sturgeon, lamprey, and other fish people are important to our people beyond what words can express. After water alone, these are the most precious gifts of the Creator. They are the basis of our culture and survival for many thousands of years. If they are poisoned, we are poisoned.

Salmon returns to the Columbia River Basin are a small fraction of historic levels. Fish tissue contamination of Columbia River fish reflects an ecosystem of impaired water quality and degraded salmon habitat. Chemical contamination of surface water and sediments presents difficult challenges to water resource managers but you can help correct it with an adequate Water Quality Budget. These challenges include sublethal and lethal impacts to salmon, lamprey, and sturgeon populations from exposure to legacy, emerging, and current-use toxins and environmental chemical mixtures.

Now we face another threat along the Columbia and other rivers in our Treaty Ceded Area. The long trains filled with crude oil from North Dakota roll across many rivers and they roll along our reservation, looming over the fishers at Sherars Falls, and close by fishers at 31 in lieu fishing and access sites on the Big River. The rail cars are not modern. They do not survive derailment, as we saw in Mosier last year.

Please pass HB 5518 with Policy Option Package #134—spill response, to help reduce pollution of our rivers and poisoning of the fish people. Thank you for the opportunity to address you on behalf of the Warm Springs Tribes about this critical budget.