



Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
to the House Committee On Energy & Environment, Oregon Legislative Assembly:
HB 2705, HB 2706, and HB 2707; Data and Funding for Water Management
March 22, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Woodrow Star. I am a member of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. I am pleased to be here to convey the Tribe's support for the intent of House Bills 2705, 2706, and 2707.

Water is our most important resource. Water is the first of the tribal First Foods. It supports all the others—salmon, big game, plants, roots and berries. It is necessary to maintain fish and wildlife habitats and the ability of our members to exercise our associated Treaty Rights. How Oregon manages our shared waters directly impacts our First Foods and our Treaty Rights.

In order to make more timely and informed decisions to address worsening water supply issues, the Tribe believes that we need greater certainty in funding water management activities. Oregon's water managers also must have more certainty in the data to make intelligent and defensible decisions. We have been able to do that in the Umatilla basin because water measurement is the norm. If it can be done in the Umatilla, it can be done across Oregon.

CTUIR's experience is that robust state water management is critical to protecting both instream and out-of-stream water rights. We could not have restored salmon to the Umatilla River without measurement. We are proud to have been collaborative partners with the farming community to grow and enhance agriculture in the basin while also restoring salmon runs. People should not be afraid of measurement because the information is helpful to all parties.

Finally, while we have accomplished much in the Umatilla basin, there is a need for more groundwater data. The Umatilla basin is on the state's short list for USGS studies and we support state funding to get this important work done.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation on the future of our most critical resource.