



Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Dedicated to Promoting Tribal Self Determination & Sovereignty

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
SUBMITTED TO
80TH OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
2019 REGULAR SESSION
ON HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 33**

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On behalf of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 33. This Resolution is key to ensuring the Governor and state agencies work in good faith with legislators, tribal governments, water stakeholders, and others in a cooperative process to create comprehensive state water vision.

ATNI is a nonprofit organization founded in 1953 representing over 50 Northwest tribal governments from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Northern California and Southeast Alaska. ATNI is dedicated to promoting tribal self-determination and sovereignty. ATNI is a regional and national leader in supporting intertribal policy work and advocacy on a host of issues including but not limited to: water, natural resources, energy, climate change, and economic development.

Water is a highly critical and invaluable resource for many tribal communities and is a resource that is at the heart of tribal culture, spirituality, and society. Tribal communities view their relationship to the water and other natural resources as one of stewardship. The key principle in this stewardship approach is “to leave the resource better than when we found it.” Today, stewardship to water and natural resources is becoming difficult as the demands and pressures on water resources increases. With these principles in mind, tribes have amassed vast expertise over countless generations in terms of their water resource management practices and approaches.

Oregon tribal communities typically have some of the highest rates of unemployment; high percentage of low-income families or families living in extreme poverty; access to healthcare is a challenge; high rates of diabetes, obesity, cancer, and heart disease; most tribal communities are located in rural areas making access to education, job centers, and other critical services difficult;

housing shortages in most tribal communities this results in homelessness and overcrowded homes; there are many challenges. Even with all these challenges many tribal people live subsistence lifestyles, which includes fishing, hunting, and access to healthy and clean water sources. This serves as evidence that tribes are fervent in their effective and efficient co-management role to ensure that water quality and quantity results in overall healthy watersheds.

In recent years, tribal water resources have been under increasing pressure for a multitude of reasons and demands, including: infrastructure, commerce, agriculture, fisheries, wildlife, industrial use, recreation, hydropower, public health, and more. These demands are facing a bigger peril, which is the impact climate change is having on water resources, hydro-systems, and water management schemes. Despite how critical a resource water is to the tribal world, conversations about water resources is ever-expanding and so too are tribal water management approaches in this day and age. Thus, Tribal leaders and communities have pointed to the need to move water to the forefront of contemporary topics facing tribal governments and their work with regional, state, federal, and other partners. This effort can and must be broadly inclusive of sovereign, diverse communities, broad stakeholder, and intergovernmental interests.

With all this in mind, ATNI submits this written testimony into the record for this important work in the State of Oregon. We appreciate that this is the beginning of an important statewide conversation about water resource management and the tribes can be an invaluable contributor to shaping the state's water vision. Oregon's Integrated Water Resource Strategy is an important approach that we can build upon and integrate intergovernmental best practices and approaches when it comes to statewide water resource management. The tribes can play a key role in bringing about collaboration and innovation to complex resource management issues, such examples exist in the Deschutes and Umatilla basins. Going forward, there is an affirmative need to ensure that we allow for innovation and appropriate water resource management approaches, albeit through natural or built infrastructure.

Thank you for this opportunity to ensure the tribal sovereign perspective has a space in this important statewide conversation about our shared 100-year water vision in Oregon. Should there be any questions or comments or invitations for inclusion in this process please coordinate with me at 503-249-5770 or via email at dcalica@atnitribes.org.

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