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CTUIR supports Rep. Simpson's Columbia Basin Initiative

Mission, OR – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) supports Congressman Mike Simpson's newly-announced Columbia Basin Fund initiative. The plan calls for restoring the lower Snake River while making whole all impacted users of the Columbia River and changing the way fish and wildlife restoration, protection and enhancement is done in the Columbia Basin.

“Restoring the lower Snake River will allow salmon, steelhead and lamprey to flourish in the rivers and streams of the Snake Basin,” said Kat Brigham, Chair of the CTUIR Board of Trustees. “This has long been a priority because these are the CTUIR's ancestral traditional use areas, such as the Grande Ronde, Imnaha, Lostine, Minam, Tucannon and Wallowa Rivers and their tributaries.”

In 1995, the CTUIR adopted a Salmon Policy calling for decisive action to save salmon in the Basin from extinction. It called for “the staged, strategic modification or removal of...the lower four Snake River Dams...coincident with development of a New Energy Plan for the region and implementation of aggressive energy conservation programs.”

The CTUIR has deployed significant resources in many arenas, through mutual agreements over decades in its fight to restore salmon, steelhead and lamprey and the ecosystems they depend upon. Congressman Simpson's initiative is both consistent with the CTUIR's 1995 Salmon Policy, and provides a framework to achieve recovery of these Treaty resources while allowing for regional economic investment, energy independence and a long-term resolution to the salmon wars in the courts.

The CTUIR looks forward to working with the entire Northwest Congressional Delegation, Columbia Basin Tribes and states as this initiative moves forward. We encourage stakeholders to consider this transformational approach and be open to new possibilities.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is made up of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes, formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 statute 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the treaty rights guaranteed under federal statute.

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