



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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PAUL LUMLEY
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TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
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Good afternoon Chairmen Unger and Edwards and members of the Committee. My name is Paul Lumley and I am the executive director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. This Commission serves as a technical and coordinating agency for the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Yakama, and Nez Perce tribes. Our four member tribes secured a treaty right to fish at all their usual and accustomed fishing areas, which are documented in each of their treaties with the United States government.

The tribes' ability to exercise their treaty fishing right is directly related to healthy salmon populations. Salmon health is determined by a number of factors, including healthy estuaries. Recognizing the significance of the estuary in salmon recovery, the tribes called for an emphasis on estuary health in our salmon restoration plan: Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit (The Spirit of the Salmon).

The Estuary Partnership is an essential component to the ecosystem recovery of the Columbia River Basin. A component of the National Estuary Program, the Estuary Partnership allows key partners to work together to address the problems facing the Columbia River estuary. While we restored 18,000 acres of habitat in the lower Columbia, there is still work to be done. We have lost 84,000 acres of habitat there since 1880. Thirteen populations of salmon are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Every population of salmon in the Columbia River Basin relies on the estuary. Given this, any problems with the estuary affect every salmon population. Toxics can be found throughout the estuary, which is known to cause abnormal reproduction, behavior, and growth in fish, wildlife and humans.

The state's continued support for the Estuary Partnership is essential to its ability to continue and complete work that:

- Improves ecosystem function,
- Aids recovery endangered runs of native salmonids, and
- Improves water quality.

We ask that you continue funding for the FY 2013-2015 biennium for the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership at the current level. As a National Estuary Program, the Estuary Partnership is locally driven, getting local results and providing an outstanding return on your

investment. These funds go to work on the lower Columbia River and result in a diversity of jobs, restored habitat, advanced scientific data/tools, and applied learning programs for students.

The Estuary Partnership allows us to leverage state and federal National Estuary Program funds with donations and competitive funds to yield a 40:1 return for each dollar contributed by Oregon and Washington. The investments made by the State bring huge returns to local people, local economies, and to the health of the river.

Your commitment makes a big difference to the lower Columbia River, the estuary, the communities it sustains, and the tribes. Thank you for your support and the opportunity to testify. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.