



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

700 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 1200
Portland, Oregon 97232

(503) 238-0667
F (503) 235-4228
www.critfc.org

STATEMENT OF THE
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Before the
Oregon Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Supporting Senate Bill 343 Amendments to Make Senate Bill 412 Permanent
February 19, 2015

The Fisheries Enforcement Department of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFE) and the communities it serves have benefitted from Senate Bill 412 (SB 412). CRITFE's enforcement area spans two states, 10 counties, and over 150 miles of Columbia River. Based in Hood River, CRITFE is charged by the Commission's member tribes (Yakama, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Nez Perce) with enforcing all fishing regulations and protecting tribal fishing rights along the Columbia River. Officers also protect archeological sites and police the 31 tribal fishing access sites in its service area of the Columbia, stretching from Bonneville Dam to McNary Dam. Because the geography of CRITFE's enforcement area is not defined by reservation boundaries, state law enforcement authority is essential to being able to carry out its responsibilities. Prior to SB 412, CRITFE relied on deputation agreements with county sheriffs. However, with tribal areas and responsibilities in 7 Oregon counties, securing such agreements and maintaining them in shifting political climates proved challenging.

CRITFE has been SB 412 compliant since September, 2012. Both the tribal and non-tribal publics are safer and services are more consistent in terms of professional standards. All of CRITFE's sworn personnel and dispatchers are trained in accordance with Oregon standards and meet all maintenance training requirements. When CRITFE officers, along with local or state officers, respond to emergencies together, the continuity in handling the call is more efficient. The tribal and non-tribal public is safer in terms of interagency teamwork. Much of CRITFE's mission area is in rural counties where Sheriff's departments and city police departments are small and Oregon State Police (OSP) presence is sparse. In fact, there are few jurisdictions that are able to provide 24-hour availability in the most rural areas. Only CRITFE and OSP provide year round marine operations on the Columbia River; Oregon State Marine Board funded programs are not operational from September through May each year. Collectively, tribal and non-tribal police officers are safer when they are able to cover one another, assist in collaborative investigations, and assist in the servicing of warrants and court orders.

Under SB 412 authority, CRITFE officers have initiated arrests, served state court arrest warrants, CRITFE officers have responded to mutual aid requests, and covered calls for neighboring agencies. Additionally, officers were called upon to testify in state court cases. There has been no tort claims against CRITFE for acting in its capacity under SB 412, nor have any public records requests been made.

An example of Senate Bill 412 application is a case where CRITFE, OSP and Department of Human Services cooperated in the investigation and arrest of a non-tribal adult male for the sexual abuse of three non-tribal children that occurred in Wasco County. Prior to SB 412 the investigation would have been fragmented. There would have been more redundancy in the interviewing causing additional trauma to the children. Evidence collection and preservation would have been more difficult. In this case tribal police, state police, and state human services came together to stop further harm to tribal and non-tribal communities.

Policing in the 21st century is experiencing paradigms not so different from any other. Social media and many other factors have blurred tribal and non-tribal boundaries to criminal elements. Though there may be cultural and political differences between tribal and non-tribal communities, when crime occurs everyone is harmed whether an offender, victim, criminal justice worker, tax payer, or property owner. Reductions of community harm flow from evidence based best practices in contemporary, coordinated policing supported by SB 412. Tribal police under SB 412 have demonstrated the benefits to the Oregon criminal justice system and tribal and non-tribal citizens.