

Public Hearing: HJM-15 Lake Celilo Feasibility Study
April 16, 2015

To: Chairman Brian Clem, and to members of the House Committee on Rural Communities,
Land Use, and Waters
Oregon State Capitol
Via Email

I am here to address my concern for my family's ancient fishing grounds, the Celilo Falls. With me here today is my grandmother, and eldest member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Theda Whalawitsa. She is the great-granddaughter of William "Billy" Chenook, a signer of the 1855 Treaty of Wasco, Columbia River, Oregon Territory with the Taih, Wyam, Tenino, & Dock-Spus Bands of the Walla-Walla, and the Dalles, Ki-Gal-Twal-La, and the Dog River Bands of the Wasco. It is the opinion of my family that the feasibility study suggested by HJM-15 will not enhance the health and well-being of the marine life and waters of the Columbia River, and should therefore not be approved by this committee.

The Celilo Falls were the center of Indian subsistence fishing, commerce, and social development. Our menfolk fished for family and for barter; our womenfolk fileted, dried, smoked, cooked, and canned the fish; our children learned & passed on this knowledge. Family cohesion was built in the Celilo Falls days. The flood came; we re-adjusted. We learned new streams, new industries, and other ways to provide for our families.

If passed, this study may result in the lowering of the waters to reveal our ancient fishing grounds; but for what gain? My people can't return to Celilo Falls to fish. It won't mend the broken hearts of my family from whom the Celilo Falls were taken. The study will tear off wounds long scabbed-over, and for what; the benefit of spectators? To what end would this temporary spectacle serve? My family strongly admonishes this committee to show compassion to us by voting no on HJM-15.

Sincerely,
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1957 The waters drowned our beloved fishing site, Celilo Falls