

Confederated Tribes of the
Umatilla Indian Reservation

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Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Joint Ways and Means Committee, Oregon Legislative Assembly
SB 5518, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality biennium budget
March 13, 2017

Good morning. My name is Gary Burke, and I am the chair of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Committee in support of the Governor's budget for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

The CTUIR appreciates our partnership and positive working relationships with Oregon agencies. We work very closely with DEQ because of our strong commitment to protecting the ecosystems that support our Treaty-reserved rights and resources. We continue to support and engage with DEQ in protecting water quality, air quality and remediating environmental hazards. We've partnered with DEQ in a years-long process to improve water quality standards so that they now respect and acknowledge the need to safeguard the health of tribal members. All citizens of Oregon who consume fish and value cleaner waters have reaped the benefits.

The CTUIR recognizes that the budget is extremely tight during this biennium. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore that fact that policies and approaches to protecting the environment at the national level are in a state of flux, to put it mildly. We can no longer count on the help and support of federal partners. The proposed drastic reductions in federal environmental efforts will be devastating to the progress we have made in the last eight years in protecting the natural resources that the tribes and all Oregonians value in our daily lives. It will take the tribes, and the states—working together—to fend off this onslaught.

The CTUIR supports the DEQ budget request from Governor Brown. We also encourage the Legislative Assembly to provide additional funding for environmental spill response. We understand that the Governor's budget includes an additional \$3 million for spill response not specifically in DEQ's budget, but we raise the issue today to flag it for the Subcommittee on Natural Resources and highlight the critical role DEQ plays in spill response. The current spill response budget is cobbled together from a variety of sources and receives no general fund monies. Oregon deserves a stable, consistent source of revenue to address hazardous material spills that have the potential for catastrophic impacts. Last year's Union Pacific derailment in Mosier was only the most visible spill demonstrating the risk posed by shipment of Bakken Crude oil. The CTUIR supports using a portion of the \$3 million proposed to fund the important work laid out in DEQ's Policy Option Package 134 related to spill response.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.