



Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness, Oregon Legislative Assembly  
HB 4004 February 8, 2018

Chair Evans and Members of the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness,

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) urges your support of HB 4004 to address hazardous material spills that have the potential for catastrophic impacts.

The increase in crude-by-rail shipments is unprecedented. There are tens of millions of gallons of Bakken Crude and Alberta tar sands crude traveling along the Columbia through the Gorge and up the Deschutes River on a weekly basis. The Union Pacific derailment in Mosier got a lot of attention and sparked conversation about the risk posed by Bakken Crude. However, there have been many derailments and accidents along the rail lines over the last few years including:

- On January 9 of this year, a Union Pacific train derailed on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.
- On December 27, 2016, a BNSF train struck a rock along the Deschutes River and caused a diesel spill from the engine.
- On March 2, 2015, a UP train derailed near Meacham Creek, by the Umatilla Indian Reservation.
- On September 19, 2014, a BNSF train struck a rock south of Pasco along the Columbia River and leaked over 1000 gallons of diesel fuel.
- On August 1, 2014, a UP train derailed and resulted in five rail cars sliding into the Columbia River.

We believe that timely, competent oversight is absolutely critical to make sure that the right parties are consulted and the appropriate standards are met. The contingency planning in HB 4004 is crucial to ensuring effective responses. CTUIR appreciates the inclusion of Tribes in being able to review those plans. The Tribes have unique and extensive experience in the management of natural resources, specifically water-ways, in their territory and can provide invaluable information to resource agencies.

Furthermore, Oregon deserves a stable, consistent source of revenue to address hazardous material spills that have the potential for catastrophic impacts. The current DEQ spill response budget is cobbled together from a number of sources and receives no general fund dollars. Even with the increase in the number of incidents, the number of spill response personnel has not kept pace. Right now, the nearest DEQ response staff to Pendleton is over three hours away in Portland and Interstate 84 is frequently closed due to winter weather.

HB 4004 is a step in the right direction toward better emergency response. Thank you for your time and consideration.