



**CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF
COOS LOWER UMPQUA AND SIUSLAW INDIANS**
TRIBAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

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**Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, & Siuslaw Indians
– Health Department’s Public Health Modernization Project Team** for the Joint
Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Thursday, March 23, 2023

Greetings to Representative Andrea Valderrama, Senator Winsvey Campos, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services.

The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, & Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) is a federally-recognized Indian Tribe under the Act of October 17, 1984, Public Law No. 98-481, 98 STAT. 2250. The CTCLUSI Tribe advocates on behalf of all their tribal members who reside in the following counties of Oregon: Coos, Curry, Douglas, Lane, and Lincoln.

With the COVID-19 pandemic reaching tribes around the country, tribes quickly realize their public health systems were non-existing or not adequate to protect tribal members and communities. Through this pandemic lens, tribes are re-evaluating their needs for public health systems. The CTCLUSI Health Department is no different and its mission is to promote health and wellness to all tribal members, families, and the community in which they live, play and work. It is under this mission, the CTCLUSI Health Department accepted to work with the Oregon Health Authority and Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board to start working towards a culturally appropriate and modernize public health system that will prevent diseases and promote health, prepare for emerging public and environmental health threats, and engage with the tribal members to eliminate health inequalities.

With an investment towards a sustainable Public Health infrastructure and capacity for the tribal membership, the CTCLUSI Public Health Modernization Project Team would like to submit this testimony in support of funding for the 2023-2025 OHA Public Health Modernization Project. The CTCLUSI’s Public Health infrastructure and workforce development work is necessary and **needs more funding** to progress towards establishing a community-based public health program that will **culturally appropriately respond** to ongoing communicable diseases and threats; climate change; engage with the tribal members to conduct prevention and education programs; address man-made

and natural environmental health hazards including wildfires, extreme heat, and water & air quality; and chronic disease prevention and education. A tribal public health system developed and implemented by a tribe for their tribal membership is health equity and cultural responsiveness work.

With your ongoing support and investment in a modernized tribal public health system, CTCLUSI Public Health Modernization Project will make an impact toward establishing a culturally relevant and tribal-level public health capacity that will:

- **Assess:** Explore ways to establish data sovereignty and conduct health assessments focused on health status and public health issues facing the tribal membership;
- **Investigate:** Investigate and prepare the tribal membership for man-made and natural disasters or other air, water, or land emergencies;
- **Inform, Education, and Empower:** Promote and educate to improve health outcomes by engaging the tribal membership where they live, play, rest, and work;
- **Link to Services:** Ensure the tribal membership has access to preventive health care services and screenings for chronic diseases;
- **Policies & Plans:** Support tribal health equity and explore ways to become a tribal public health authority for all hazards;
- **Public Health Authority:** Explore ways to conduct and monitor public health enforcement activities within each service area, on tribal lands and property;
- **Access to care:** Explore ways to improve access to healthcare services in each service area;
- **Workforce:** Support, maintain, and retain competent public health workforces through training or strategic recruitment outlets;
- **Quality Improvement:** Develop ways to evaluate and improve ongoing public health processes, programs, and interventions workflows;
- **Best-Practices:** Identify culturally relevant practices to inform and evaluate public health practices at CTCLUSI;
- **Administration and Management:** Maintain and develop capacity for ongoing infrastructure, operation, and management of the CTCLUSI public health system;
- **Governance:** Engage the Tribal leadership and the Health Department in maintaining CTCLUSI Public Health Department; and
- **Community Engagement:** Develop ongoing partnerships and capacity-building with local, tribal, and state public health to eliminate health inequalities.

As COVID-19 continues to threaten our healthcare systems, the tribal workforce, tribal families, and the community, we must continue to find ways to build a public health capacity that will meet these challenges. The only way to build this public health capacity

is to have **ongoing increased and stable funding and support for tribal public health infrastructure and workforces** so that we can continue to conduct public health activities for tribal memberships and communities. Lastly, CTCLUSI's sovereign political status requires state and federal agencies to honor their trust responsibility and respect Tribal sovereignty.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Siestreem". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Julie Siestreem

Tribal Council Vice - Chair

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua Siuslaw Indians