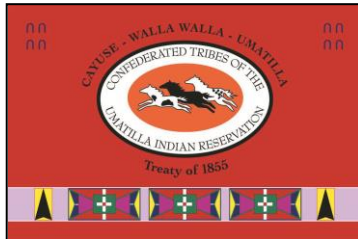


**Confederated Tribes** *of the*  
**Umatilla Indian Reservation**

Department of Natural Resources



46411 Timine Way  
Pendleton, OR 97801

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**Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
OWRD Appropriations Bill (House Bill 5043)**

**Joint Committee on Ways & Means, Natural Resources Subcommittee**

**April 6, 2023**

Co-Chairs Dembrow and Pham, and members of the Committee, my name is Eric Quaempts and I am the Director of the Department of Natural Resources for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

I am here today to ask for your help in ensuring that House Bill 5043 provides the Oregon Water Resources Department the funding and capacity it needs to effectively manage our state's water resources.

These water resources are critical to the livelihoods, well-being, and health of our communities and ecosystems. Water, or *čúuš* in our Sahaptin language, is the First Food upon which all the others – salmon, deer, roots, and berries – rely. It is central to the culture and traditions of the Umatilla Tribes and our ability to exercise the rights reserved to us in our Treaty of 1855.

For many years now, we have worked closely with the State of Oregon and Umatilla basin stakeholders to settle the water rights reserved to us in our Treaty. We know that our basin and communities are stronger when we work together, and we have spent many years working collaboratively to craft a solution that is true to this belief.

House Bill 5043 includes the funding for Policy Option Package 115 to complete our water rights settlement in the Umatilla Basin. However, adequate staff capacity at OWRD will be essential to the success of this work, and we would like to underscore the importance of adding a staff position along with this funding.

From salmon to farms, water is the lifeblood of our state. In the Umatilla Basin, we have worked tirelessly to craft a solution that is good for both salmon and farms, and an example of what we can accomplish when we work together on a shared vision. We now need your help to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.

I thank you for your time today, and ask your support for the Umatilla water rights settlement funding and an associated staff position in House Bill 5043.