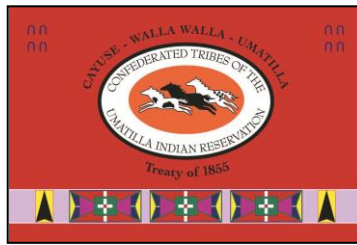


**Confederated Tribes** *of the*  
**Umatilla Indian Reservation**

Board of Trustees



46411 Timine Way  
Pendleton, OR 97801

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**Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
House Bill 3164**

**Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

**April 12, 2023**

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, my name is Lisa Ganuelas and I am a member of the Board of Trustees for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

I am here today to ask you for your support for House Bill 3164. This bill represents a clear win-win for water users and rivers. It will make permanent split-season water leasing, a tried-and-true tool for collaborative streamflow restoration. The flexibility it affords enables water right holders to both maintain their livelihoods and help restore our fisheries.

Salmon — *núsux* in our Sahaptin language — have been sacred to the culture and traditions of the Tribes since time immemorial. They are central to exercising the rights reserved to us in our Treaty of 1855. However, today, many of these fisheries have been pushed to the brink of extinction by the over-allocation of water and depletion of instream flows. Despite this fact, we have been working tirelessly to overcome these challenges and restore our fisheries. Split-season leasing is key to the success of this work.

With split-season leasing, a water user can irrigate during the beginning of the season, when growing conditions are best and crops are most productive. Then, late in the summer, water users can legally protect their water instream so it's there for the fish when they need it most. Federal, state, and private funding is available to provide compensation for this, and often these payments are more than water users could get trying to produce another crop later in the season. Losing this flexibility would hurt both agriculture as well as our state's fisheries and those who depend upon them.

Since the legislature first established the split-season leasing authority more than 20 years ago, this tool has become essential to working together with the agricultural community to restore instream flows. Our efforts to re-establish fisheries in the Walla Walla, Grande Ronde, and Wallowa are critically dependent upon this important tool, which provides flows during the late summer when returning salmon need it most. Without this important tool, our restoration efforts in these basins will falter.

Split-season leasing has demonstrated that, if we work together, we can have both a thriving agricultural community and a thriving river community—but we must be equipped with the right tools. With this legislation, you have the opportunity to ensure that we are.

I thank you for your time today, and ask for your support for this important bill.