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Support for House Bill 2765 and Amendment

May 3, 2023

Dear Members of the Oregon House Rules Committee,

From time immemorial, the Traditional Homelands of the Modoc Nation consisted of over 5,000 square miles along what is now the California-Oregon border. Our ancestors managed this landscape for sustainable food sources and developed products for economic trade. Today, the Modoc Nation is a federally recognized Native American Tribe, with our treaty signed in 1864 and ratified in 1870.

The Modoc Nation is committed to collaborative solutions using sound scientific methods and a stewardship-based approach. By working with all Homelands neighbors, the Modoc Nation will preserve and protect the land and health of its People.

On behalf of the Modoc Nation, and with our mission and major initiatives in mind, we are writing in support of House Bill 2765. We also express our support of the amendment for this bill, which would dedicate at least 25 percent of the treated wastewater discharged by the South Suburban Sanitary District (SSSD) to the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges. This language is the direct result of collaborative discussions between Ken Sandusky, Resource and Development Director of the Modoc Nation and SSSD Director Joe Spendolini.

The water to be made available under HB 2765 is critical to our goal of seeing these areas restored and improved. In particular, the Modoc Nation is heavily invested in efforts in and around Lower Klamath Lake, with the goal of rehabilitating and improving Tribally significant lands for conservation and cultural connection.

We appreciate the significant investment that SSSD and the Klamath community are undertaking to improve the quality of the District's treated wastewater, and we support SSSD's commitment to guarantee no less than 25 percent treated wastewater for use in Lower Klamath Lake. Consistent with our recent discussions with representatives of both SSSD and the Klamath Drainage District, we are confident that the Modoc Nation can help secure support to enable a large majority of the remaining treated wastewater, if not 100 percent of it, to be delivered to Lower Klamath Lake and adjacent areas of interest to our Nation.

We urge the House Rules Committee to take action on HB 2765 and pass it out of committee, with the amendment. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chief Robert Burkybile III

Modoc Nation