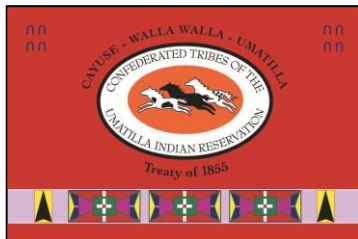


Confederated Tribes *of the*
Umatilla Indian Reservation

Department of Natural Resources



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**Testimony of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Walla Walla 2050 Legislation
Senate Bill 1567**

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

February 27, 2024

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the Committee, my name is Anton Chiono and I represent the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

I am here today to ask you for your support for Senate Bill 1567. This legislation will enable the implementation of the Walla Walla 2050 Plan, which we helped create in collaboration with Oregon, Washington, and basin stakeholders. This Plan is our roadmap for cooperative water management in the Walla Walla Basin.

In the Tribes' language, *Walla Walla* means "land of many waters." This refers to the abundant streams that once flowed through the Walla Walla Valley, where the Tribes gathered to fish for the bountiful runs of salmon that once returned to the Basin.

These fisheries have been sacred to the culture and traditions of the Tribes since time immemorial and are central to exercising the rights reserved to the Tribes in their Treaty of 1855. These salmon, and the water that supports them, are two of the Tribes' most important "First Foods"—but they are nearly gone from the Walla Walla today.

Today, the Tribes' ancestral homeland in the basin is divided between two states, Oregon and Washington. This political boundary has prevented the management of the Walla Walla's water resources in a cooperative, holistic manner. It has rendered the Basin unable to solve the problems facing both instream flows and water users alike, despite our shared desire to do so.

The Tribes and basin stakeholders recognize the urgent need for cooperative, bi-state water management. We are committed to working together to solve our water challenges. We have invested millions of dollars to restore salmon to the Walla Walla and look forward to welcoming back the first cohort of returning adult fish in 2025. Our partners in the water user community have been central to this effort, and share our vision of a healthy, thriving basin for both fish and farms.

Indeed, we have an excellent model for this collaborative approach in the Umatilla, where the passage of the 1988 Umatilla Basin Project Act provided us with the tools necessary to solve our water challenges collaboratively and restore salmon.

We now need those tools in the Walla Walla. The State of Washington recognized this need, and unanimously passed its counterpart legislation in Olympia last year. We now must do the same here in Oregon.

We have before us an opportunity to achieve our shared vision in the Walla Walla—but we cannot do so without your help. I thank you for your time today and ask your support for this important bill.