



COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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March 4, 2025

Chair Ken Helm and Chair Mark Owens
Committee on Agriculture, Land use, Natural Resources and Water
Oregon House

RE: Letter of Support for HB 3314

Dear Chairs Helm and Owens:

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) is concerned about the effects of harmful algal blooms in our rivers and as such, supports HB 3314, which provides funding to address these blooms. CRITFC wants to improve the health and well-being of the Willamette River and has committed staff resources to this end, joining the Human Access Project and other partners to address the harmful impacts of the Ross Island algae bloom.

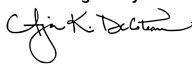
CRITFC is a tribal organization wholly owned and governed by four sovereign tribes with treaty-reserved rights that extend into the Willamette River: the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Formed in 1977, CRITFC ensures the protection and restoration of tribal treaty fishing rights through coordination, technical assistance, and management.

Studies from Oregon State University show that harmful algae blooms, such as in the area around Ross Island lagoon, can lead to high pH values and low dissolved oxygen, creating dead zones that are lethal to aquatic life. This poses a serious risk to fish populations, including Pacific lamprey, which are harvested by fishers from all our member tribes in the Willamette River. These fishers spend extended periods in direct contact with the water, making river conditions an important factor not only for the health of the fisheries, but for their own well-being.

Additionally, CRITFC has partnered with OMSI to develop a Waterfront Education Park along the river just downstream from the Ross Island lagoon. Envisioned as a space where city residents can learn more about the tribal cultural connection to the Willamette as well as form their own close connection to the river, the threat of regular harmful algae blooms would undermine this effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 3314 to address water quality at Ross Island Lagoon and for tribal fishers.

Respectfully,

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Aja K. DeCoteau
Executive Director