



Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Nez Perce Tribe's Testimony in Support of HB 2184
Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project
Joint Committee on Transportation
April 1, 2025

The Nez Perce Tribe supports House Bill 2184 due to our significant cultural ties to the Columbia River, especially near Hood River, Oregon where we have harvested fish since time immemorial, not only for religious and cultural purposes, but commercial as well. The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement project will increase the preservation of a vital transportation conduit between Oregon and Washington states. This improved artery will address several necessary improvements to increase safety and multi-modal transportation access for the surrounding communities.

Objectives of this project, aimed squarely at improving transportation of the bridgeway area, include:

- Improving traffic operations for current and future cross-river traffic and at connections to I-84 and SR 14;
- Improving vehicle and freight travel safety by reducing real and perceived hazards;
- Improving river navigation for vessels passing under the bridge;
- Improving the river crossing's seismic resiliency;
- Maintaining and improving a transportation link between the White Salmon, Bingen, and Hood River communities, businesses, and services;
- Providing a cross-river connection for bicyclists and pedestrians; and
- Fulfilling the legislative directives tied to the project funding.

This project will also benefit the exercise of treaty-reserved rights by Nez Perce Tribal members and members of other tribes who frequently use the bridge for commuting to and from work, accessing fishing sites, or transporting catch to market. This project encourages the practice and preservation of tribal traditions and heritage.

We respectfully ask this Committee to support HB 2184. Passing this bill would eliminate bridge hazards that currently exist, increase usage of the bridge, and improve a vital, cross-river transportation link. This crucial Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement project would benefit this generation and those to come.

Thank you.