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**Oregon State Legislature
Joint Committee on Transportation
Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Co-Vice Chair Starr, Co-Vice Chair Boshart Davis
and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation**

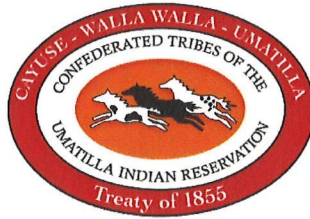
Re: Support of HB 2184

Dear Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair McLain, Co-Vice Chair Starr, Co-Vice Chair Boshart Davis and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) in support of House Bill 2184.

The CTUIR is a federally recognized Indian tribe which, pursuant to its Treaty of 1855 with the United States (12 Stat. 945), reserved pre-existing, off-reservation rights to continue fishing at usual and accustomed stations, and to hunt, gather roots and berries, and pasture livestock on unclaimed lands. The CTUIR cares deeply about our land and communities and has significant cultural ties to the Columbia River, including near Hood River, Oregon.

Our members have lived, hunted, gathered and fished along the Columbia and throughout the northwest since time immemorial. CTUIR members continue to fish along the Columbia River, not only for religious and cultural purposes, but for commercial purposes as well. Our Treaty Rights are essential to our livelihood, which is why we support and invest in our region and its natural resources, as well as the infrastructure needed for our members to access and harvest these resources. The Hood River White Salmon Bridge Replacement project will improve a vital transportation route for our members between Oregon and Washington.

This bridge will replace an aging, inadequate bridge and will be a critical improvement for safe travel across the Columbia for tribal members and surrounding communities. The objectives of this project are aimed squarely at improving transportation of the region and the Hood River/White Salmon area, including:



1. Improve traffic operations for current and future cross-river traffic and at connections to I-84 and SR 14;
2. Improve vehicle and freight travel safety by reducing real and perceived hazards;
3. Improve river navigation for vessels passing under the bridge;
4. Improve the river crossing's seismic resiliency;
5. Maintain and improve a transportation link between the White Salmon, Bingen, and Hood River communities, businesses and services;
6. Provide a cross-river connection for bicyclists and pedestrians; and
7. Fulfill the legislative directives tied to the Project funding.

This project is of great importance to us as a treaty tribe, specifically to our tribal fishers, tribal members, and tribal family members who frequently use the bridge for work, to access their fishing sites, or transport their catch to market. This project encourages the practice and preservation of our shared tribal traditions and heritage. We also understand that the improved bridge will result in improved stormwater and runoff management, reducing the amount of harmful runoff that reaches the Columbia River and the aquatic environment that it supports.

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. The benefits of this crucial Hood River White Salmon Bridge Replacement project would be lasting and affect this generation and those to come.

For these reasons, the CTUIR supports the funding for the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement project that would be provided by passage of HB 2184

Sincerely,

Gary I. Burke, Chairman
Board of Trustees