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GENERAL COUNCIL  
and  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CONFEDERATED TRIBES  
of the

*Umatilla Indian Reservation*

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October 2, 2006

The Honorable Christine Gregoire  
Governor, State of Washington  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002  
FAX: (360) 753-4110

*\* other recipients of this letter:*

*The Honorable Ted Kulorgoski  
The Honorable Greg Walden  
The Honorable Cathy McMoris  
The Honorable Doc Hastings  
The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Gordon Smith  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
The Honorable Ron Wyden*

Dear Governor Gregoire:

On behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), I am writing to you about a matter of utmost urgency and importance. The Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NWPCC) is currently considering a proposal for funding fish and wildlife mitigation projects for 2007-09. Unfortunately, this proposal, if adopted, would result in serious and significant curtailment of tribal projects that at present provide numerous and substantial benefits to all the citizens of the region. If this misguided approach proceeds, fish and wildlife protection and mitigation will be undermined, projects will end, dozens of resource professionals in rural areas will lose their jobs, local economies will suffer, and the goals and objectives of the Northwest Power Act will be fundamentally thwarted.

The NWPCC's draft recommendations are inconsistent with the CTUIR's Treaty Rights, contrary to the provisions of the Act. Northwest Power Act, §4(h)(6)(D) ("The Council shall include in the program measures which it determines . . . will . . . be consistent with the legal rights of appropriate Indian tribes in the region[.]") It is particularly disconcerting that one of the principle targets of these cuts is the Walla Walla Basin. Much of our collaborative work there—which we understood you to support—would cease with the proposed funding scheme. Actions such as collaborative salmonid monitoring and evaluation, fish habitat enhancement, fish passage operations, and hatchery planning would be eliminated. Cooperative, collaborative work in the Walla Walla has already received substantial State support in the form of the \$400,000 award pursuant to the recent Washington water legislation, for which we remain most grateful. The NWPCC's recommended funding would be an essential match needed to fully achieve the restoration goals in the Basin. Thus we have been gravely disappointed at how the Council could potentially authorize and accept elimination of the matching funding, and at how Washington's Council representatives have apparently condoned it or were even complicit in allowing it to occur.

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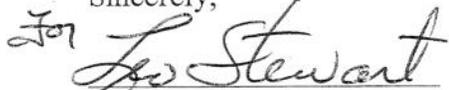
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In the Umatilla River Basin, CTUIR projects aimed at Pacific lamprey and freshwater mussel restoration and research would come to a halt. Fish habitat enhancement in the John Day River Basin would be cut. Collectively, the loss to the CTUIR's fish and wildlife mitigation efforts would be \$1.622 million. Overall, this would translate into a major setback for a comprehensive, ongoing program that has been developed and implemented over many years, often in collaboration with local stakeholders. It would place at risk the real, demonstrated, tangible benefits that have been obtained by the CTUIR, and that have accrued to all who enjoy and value our shared natural resources.

The CTUIR urges you to address this issue and draw on the authority and resources of your office to oppose this proposal and stop the threat of an imminent, major retreat from the Northwest Power Act. The current NWPCC proposal is unacceptable and should not be adopted. Furthermore, in the longer-term context, we encourage you to examine and consider the broader problem of insufficient funding from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for fish and wildlife. The facts clearly establish that BPA can afford relatively modest, necessary increases in fish and wildlife funding with minimal effects on power rates. Nevertheless, BPA continues to dismiss this possibility, and instead engage in a pervasive campaign to misrepresent legally-required fish and wildlife costs, maximize its generation revenues, and minimize costs to power purchasers, regardless of the environmental consequences and the Act's "equitable treatment" mandate.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. The CTUIR would greatly appreciate your attention to this issue, and your active participation in support of our position opposing the current NWPCC proposal. Specifically, we request that you contact BPA Administrator Steve Wright and Council Chairman Tom Karier and urge them to restore and maintain necessary CTUIR project funding. We ask that you also join with us in seeking longer-term solutions to the matter of protecting and enhancing the natural heritage of the Northwest—including securing the funding needed to do it. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this subject further, please contact me at the number above or Donald Sampson, Executive Director, at (541) 276-2026.

Sincerely,



Antone C. Minthorn  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Cc: Stephen J. Wright, Administrator, BPA  
Tom Karier, Chairman, NWPCC