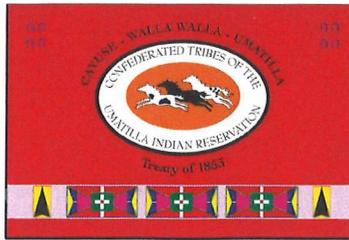


**Confederated Tribes *of the*
Umatilla Indian Reservation**

Board of Trustees & General Council



46411 Timine Way • Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 429-7030 • fax (541) 276-3095
www.ctuir.org email: info@ctuir.org

October 31, 2022

Allison Ludtke, Policy Advisor
Animal Welfare Institute
900 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington DC 20003

Transmitted electronically to: allison@awionline.org

Re: Support for Beaver Conflict Mitigation Demonstration Program.

Dear Allison Ludtke;

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Board of Trustees supports the draft Beaver Conflict Mitigation Demonstration Program. This proposal, including the legislative concept for a grant program for nonlethal beaver conflict mitigation, looks like it has great potential for ecosystem restoration. The CTUIR has worked for decades to restore salmon and other wildlife to our homelands and we have found native beaver populations are critical for properly functioning ecosystems.

The CTUIR is a federally-recognized Indian tribe, with a reservation in northeast Oregon and ceded, aboriginal, traditional use areas, and usual and accustomed areas in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and other Northwest states. In 1855, predecessors to the CTUIR—ancestors with the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes—negotiated and signed the Treaty of 1855 with the United States, 12 Stat. 945. In our Treaty, we ceded millions of acres of land to the federal government, and in exchange received assurances that our sovereignty would be recognized and respected, our various pre-existing tribal rights would be honored, and our interests would be maintained and safeguarded, in perpetuity. The Federal Government has a duty to honor and uphold the Treaty of 1855 and all Indian treaties and to act as a steward and trustee to ensure that the terms and commitments of such treaties are fulfilled.

Almost three decades ago, the CTUIR adopted our Columbia Basin Salmon Policy. That policy states:

The beaver must be restored to all rivers. Beavers restore wetlands, reconnect floodplains with rivers and streams, and otherwise restore watersheds. Bring back the beaver and good quality salmon habitat will follow.

Beavers provide many benefits to the aquatic landscape including creating pool habitats (increasing habitat complexity), boosting sediment retention, promoting retention and processing of organic matter and nutrients improving water quality, and inundating areas creating floodplain wetlands. Pools and wetlands created by beaver dams provide rearing habitat for lamprey and juvenile salmonids such as coho salmon and steelhead. Additionally, beaver dams affect hydrology patterns by increasing water storage and decreasing discharge, which in turn promotes groundwater recharge, creation of localized groundwater upwelling, and cool-water refugia.

CTUIR BOT Letter to the Animal Welfare Institute
Re: Support for Beaver Conflict Mitigation Demonstration Program
October 31, 2022
Page 2 of 2

The CTUIR has long recognized the importance of restoring the natural ecological balance that existed prior to the arrival of non-Native populations. This concept of mitigating conflicts between the presence of beavers and relatively new land development activities will function to keep beavers on the landscape and restore the natural floodplain.

The CTUIR believes the legislative concept could benefit from language specifically addressing cooperative efforts with habitat managers for relocation of beaver in order to accomplish watershed restoration goals, as well as language emphasizing relocation when all other conflict mitigation measures are unsuccessful.

The CTUIR looks forward to working with you and your partners in seeing the legislation be drafted, enacted and implemented. Please feel free to contact Eric Quaempts, Director of the CTUIR Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or Andrew Wildbill, DNR Program Manager of our Wildlife Program, both may be reached at 541-429-7200.

Respectfully,



for: N. Kathryn Brigham, Chair
Board of Trustees

Cc: Zack Strong, Senior Staff Attorney, Animal Welfare Institute via email Zack@awionline.org