

Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group Executive Statement

August 24, 2011

Background Statement

The Columbia River Basin is one of the world's great river basins in watershed size, river volume, and environmental and cultural significance. The Basin drains about 259,000 square miles with over 8 million people and hundreds of fish and wildlife species that inhabit the Basin and depend on its resources for their health and livelihood.

Columbia River salmon and steelhead runs were once the largest runs in the world, but are now threatened and endangered in large part due to habitat loss and reduction in water quality. Tribal people in the Basin have depended on the salmon runs and other native fish for physical, spiritual, and cultural sustenance for centuries.

There is public and scientific concern about the health of the Basin ecosystem, especially with regard to potential adverse impacts associated with the presence of toxic contaminants. In September 2010, EPA and the Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Working Group released the Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Action Plan with 5 initiatives and 61 actions to reduce a wide array of toxics in the Columbia River Basin.

http://www.epa.gov/region10/pdf/columbia/toxics-action-plan_sept2010.pdf

In order to make progress in reducing toxics in the Basin, and to complete the actions outlined in the Action Plan it will be necessary to: collaborate with all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, industry groups, and the public; improve communication with Basin residents; and raise awareness of toxics issues and reduction efforts and opportunities.

Given this need, we the undersigned commit to collaborate to reduce toxics in the Columbia River Basin through the formalization¹ of the Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group, including the support of Federal, State, and Tribal executives to guide toxics reduction work in the Columbia Basin through collaborative decision-making. The undersigned below agree that this commitment is based on available resources and does not commit our agencies or governments to any additional resources to accomplish this work.

¹ "Formalization" of the Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group means that the undersigned: 1) Acknowledge the importance of the Working Group for increasing collaboration and cooperation across the Columbia Basin on toxics reduction and 2) agree to allow staff to attend and actively participate, as resources allow, in the meetings of the Working Group which occur 2 -3 times a year.

Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group
Executive Statement Signatories

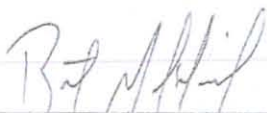
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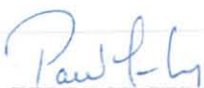
N. Kathryn Bigham, Confederated Tribes of
the Umatilla Indian Reservation



Barry Burnell, Idaho Department of
Environmental Quality



Rick Eichstaedt, Spokane Riverkeeper



Paul Lumley, Columbia River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission



Debrah Marriott, Lower Columbia River
Estuary Partnership



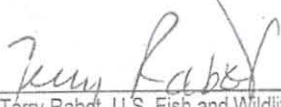
Dennis McLerran, U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency, Region 10



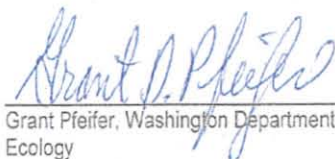
Dick Pedersen, Oregon Department of
Environmental Quality



Anthony Paulson, U.S. Geological Survey



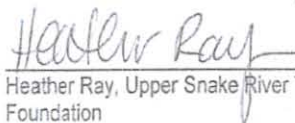
Terry Rabot, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Grant Pfeifer, Washington Department of
Ecology



Kevin Scribner, Salmon Safe



Heather Ray, Upper Snake River Tribes
Foundation



Brett VandenHeuvel, Columbia Riverkeeper



Michael Tehan, National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration, National
Marine Fisheries Service