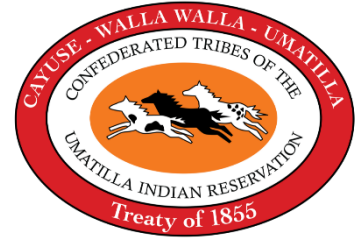


Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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Gov. Kotek Signs Proclamation Returning Civil Legal Jurisdiction to CTUIR

SALEM – Gov. Tina Kotek has signed a proclamation to return sole legal jurisdiction in civil matters on the Umatilla Indian Reservation (UIR) to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

“Since the early 1980s, the CTUIR has exercised our criminal jurisdiction on our reservation by way of retrocession,” CTUIR Board of Trustees Chair N. Kathryn Brigham said. “Four decades later, the state, under Gov. Tina Kotek, is retroceding civil jurisdiction back to the CTUIR, and we are extremely happy that it has come to fruition.”

The signing ends a 73-year history of the state having concurrent jurisdiction with the CTUIR in civil cases on the UIR. The state’s Public Law-280 criminal jurisdiction over the CTUIR was retroceded in 1981. Its PL-280 civil jurisdiction, however, remained in place until now.

“This proclamation represents the tangible work of reconciliation and affirming the sovereign status of tribal nations,” Gov. Kotek said. “This action restores the tribe’s independent power to administer justice. Moving forward, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and all sovereign tribes utilizing this path, can continue to determine their destinies on their own terms.”

“Today’s action by Gov. Kotek reflects the state of Oregon’s firm commitment to tribal sovereignty,” State Sen. Anthony Broadman (D-Bend), chief sponsor of Senate Bill 1011, said. “Strengthening tribal jurisdiction improves access to justice, public safety and our governmental ties with Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribal nations.”

Enacted by Congress in 1953, PL-280 required certain states, including Oregon, to assume criminal jurisdiction and certain civil jurisdiction over tribal lands. On the criminal side, this law authorized state law enforcement to operate on reservations without tribal consent and to prosecute crimes involving Native

people in state courts. Its civil provisions opened state courts to private civil disputes arising in Indian Country but did not grant states civil regulatory authority over tribes.

In 1968, PL-280 was amended to require tribal consent for any new state assumption of jurisdiction and to allow a state to return jurisdiction to the federal government through retrocession. Although a tribe could request retrocession, the decision rested with the state, and Oregon lacked a specific process for carrying it out.

In Oregon's 2025 Legislative Session, SB 1011 established a clear statutory process for the retrocession of PL-280 jurisdiction. Prior to the bill, decisions on retrocession were made on a case-by-case basis, which created uncertainty for tribes pursuing jurisdictional restoration as well as the state. SB 1011 had bipartisan sponsorship and passed unanimously in the Senate on March 31, 2025, and in the House on May 14, 2025. Gov. Kotek signed the SB 1011 into law on May 22, 2025.

The governor will now petition the U.S. Secretary of the Interior pursuant to 25 USC 1323, and any regulations promulgated thereunder, to accept this retrocession.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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