

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



46411 Timine Way
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-276-3165 • CTUIR.org

Aug. 23, 2024

Contact: Travis Snell • 541.429.7394 • travissnell@ctuir.org

CTUIR, IHS Leaders to Sign MOA for \$44.5M Water Project

MISSION – Elected leaders of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and Indian Health Service (IHS) officials will sign a memorandum of agreement on Monday, Aug. 26 for the tribe's \$44.5 million wastewater treatment project.

The ceremonial signing is set for noon at the Nixyáawii Governance Center to celebrate the \$38 million IHS has appropriated from its Sanitation Facilities Construction (SFC) Program for the Mission Community Wastewater System Upgrade.

"The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is tremendously grateful to the Indian Health Service for its efforts in securing this crucial funding for our much-needed wastewater treatment plant," CTUIR Chairman Gary I. Burke said. "Once constructed, this facility will allow the CTUIR to produce water for irrigation needs while reducing groundwater usage from local aquifers. This project will also facilitate economic and community development as well as housing opportunities on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, while limiting the impact to our crucial groundwater resources."

This project is the largest funded by the IHS Portland Area SFC Program. Public Works will operate the facility along Mission Road with the ability to treat up to 1.5 million gallons of wastewater per day. It will also conserve aquifer water by maintaining current demand levels while serving the growing community.

"It is estimated that, in 2042, 444,000 gallons per day of reuse water would be available to offset water withdrawals from the regional aquifer," Public Works Director Justin Northern said. "That is equivalent to the annual permitted water production capacity of two to three additional community wells. The treatment and reclamation process will produce a valuable resource for reuse as Class A-recycled water suitable for watering lawns and gardens, including fruit and vegetable plants."

"Having access to clean water is something that many take for granted, yet there are far too many communities across Indian Country that to this day do not have access to safe and reliable water and sanitation infrastructure," said IHS Director Roselyn Tso. "I have seen firsthand the impact of not having access to these essential services. It is a matter of public health, but it is also a matter of respect for our Native people. For 65 years, the Indian Health Service has played a leading role in improving water and sanitation services to our people, but with limited resources. This is why the Biden-Harris Administration's

historic investment in this infrastructure is so important in improving overall well-being of our tribal communities.”

Along with the IHS funding, U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden helped secure \$3 million from the Environmental Protection Agency for the wastewater system project, while the CTUIR will provide \$3.5 million.

Construction on the facility is expected to start in late 2025 with a completion goal in late 2027.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla 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.

###