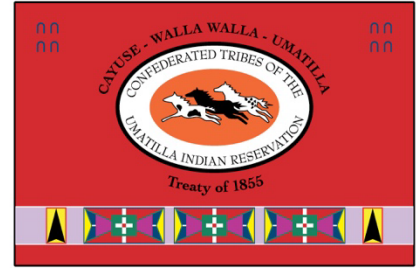


# Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation



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## **CTUIR Hosts Sen. Merkley's Umatilla County Town Hall**

MISSION – The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) hosted U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley's Umatilla County Town Hall meeting on Sunday, May 19 at the Nixyáawii Governance Center.

The event started shortly after 10 a.m. with Oregon's Democratic senator meeting with Chairman Gary I. Burke, Treasurer Raymond Huesties and Member at Large Corinne Sams of the CTUIR Board of Trustees (Board) in the Board Chambers. Topics discussed included:

- The \$37.8 million wastewater treatment center the CTUIR plans to build for recycling water for non-potable uses,
- The CTUIR seeking Umatilla Basin water rights to provide instream flows for fisheries and treaty fishing as well as ground and surface waters to provide for the purposes for which the Umatilla Indian Reservation was established,
- The Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement, which established a partnership between the CTUIR, Nez Perce Tribe, Warm Springs Tribes, Yakama Nation, states of Oregon and Washington and the U.S. government to rebuild salmon runs to sustainable healthy and abundant levels and to account and provide for other Columbia River system stakeholders,
- The opposition of the Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation establishing a casino near Pasco, Washington, which is opposed by the Yakama Nation and CTUIR, and
- Pursuit of public access to Willamette Falls.

"We thank Sen. Merkley and his staff for coming to the Umatilla Indian Reservation for his Town Hall and for meeting members of the Board of Trustees face to face to discuss issues that we hold dear and see as priorities," Burke said. "We are glad that our doors are open for him to conduct his business with the public here today, and we hope that his doors will always be open to us as we strengthen our relationship."

Before a crowd of about 60 people, the Town Hall started around noon with audience members raising concerns such as:

- Congressional overhaul of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval process,
- Providing more rehabilitation opportunities for drug and alcohol addiction,
- Providing the U.S. government the ability to negotiate pharmaceutical prices,
- Lack of affordable housing options,

- Suicide prevention and anti-bullying measures,
- High amounts of nitrates in regional water sources,
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women/People, and
- Rising wages and inflation.

“I hold a Town Hall for every Oregon county every year because there is simply no substitute to hearing directly from folks about the ideas and priorities that matter most to them and their communities. Oregonians’ thoughts help shape my work in Congress, including positions on policies, ideas for bills and strategies for securing resources for every corner of our state,” Merkley said. “Over the course of the more than 550 Town Halls I’ve held since Oregonians sent me to the Senate, I’ve seen how these events provide respectful, safe spaces for people to express their unique points of view during these often-divisive times. We all benefit significantly when we leave our comfort zone and open ourselves up to new ways of looking at issues – me included.”

The Town Hall was one of nine in-person meetings for Eastern Oregon counties in May: Malheur, Harney and Grant counties on May 17; Baker, Union and Wallowa counties on May 18; and Umatilla, Morrow and Gilliam counties on May 19.

The meetings are part of Merkley’s 2024 Town Hall tour of Oregon, in which he is holding a community conversation for each of the state’s 36 counties.

*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.*

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Caption1: U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley listens to Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Chairman Gary I. Burke on May 19 at the CTUIR Nixyáawii Governance Center in Mission. Merkley hosted his Umatilla County Town Hall meeting at the governance center. CTUIR

Caption2: U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley laughs while visiting with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Board of Trustees on May 19 at the CTUIR Nixyáawii Governance Center in Mission. Merkley and his staff held a public Town Hall at the governance center. In the back from left to right are Merkley’s Outreach Director Stacey Jochimsen, Press/Communications Director Molly Prescott and Assistant Andrew Jauhainen. CTUIR

Caption3: U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley speaks to the crowd during his Umatilla County Town Hall meeting on May 19 at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Nixyáawii Governance Center in Mission. Merkley annually visits all 36 Oregon counties. CTUIR