



## YAKAMA NATION RESPONDS TO MURRAY – INSLEE DRAFT SALMON REPORT

*Tribe views near-term dam removal as critical to salmon survival in the Columbia Basin.*

YAKAMA RESERVATION, TOPPENISH, WA – The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (“Yakama Nation”) recognize Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Governor Jay Inslee (D-WA) for their release of a draft report today regarding the critical condition of salmon in the Pacific Northwest and the feasibility of removing the lower Snake River dams to improve salmon survival.

“Salmon in the Snake River and Columbia River Basin are at a crisis point,” said Yakama Tribal Council Chairman, Delano Saluskin. “Our people are salmon people. When the salmon thrive, we thrive; but when they suffer, our people suffer too. We have elders who were alive when 16 million salmon returned to this basin every year. Now the numbers are a small fraction of that. Successful salmon recovery is possible and will benefit millions of people and thousands of businesses throughout the region. The Yakama Nation sees near-term dam removal as a critical part of a comprehensive salmon solution in the Columbia and Snake River Basins. We applaud Senator Murray and Governor Inslee for their leadership on this issue and for engaging with us in developing policy positions.”

The Yakama Nation believes a comprehensive salmon solution in the Columbia and Snake River Basins, should be a legislative action plan that:

- Puts dam removal on the table for discussion, analysis, and implementation wherever possible, as soon as possible.
- Gets the U.S. Department of Energy out of the fish business and puts expert tribal and state fisheries co-managers directly in charge of fisheries restoration work.
- Funds the current “Billion Dollar + Backlog” of regionally supported fish passage, hatchery, and habitat restoration work.
- Provides significant increased resources for mitigation actions necessary to ensure fish population health in the face of increased environmental pressures.
- Ensures that proposed solutions and all new energy and transportation infrastructure projects are developed in a manner that respects tribal sovereignty and protects tribal treaty rights.

The Yakama Nation understands that affordable, reliable, and environmentally responsible power and transportation options are critical to all communities in the Pacific Northwest – both tribal and non-tribal. “We sympathize with the concerns of our neighbors in the power and agricultural industries,” said Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation Superintendent of Natural Resources and a Yakama Farm Board member. “The Yakama Nation also feels these concerns, since we operate both power and agricultural enterprises to serve our people. The draft Murray-Inslee report shows that the lower Snake River dams *can* be removed with benefits to the entire region, and that industries who currently depend on the dams can thrive and get business done in new ways if properly supported, but we must move with urgency if we are to avoid salmon extinction.”

“We look forward to supporting the Murray-Inslee team as they finalize this report and develop policy recommendations in the coming weeks,” concluded Chairman Saluskin.