FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Seattle, WA. The Native American Land Conservancy, a nationally-recognized intertribal organization, is sponsoring the Kwel hoy’ (“We draw the line”) Totem Pole journey and its 1,700-mile, 16-day trip following the coal train rail lines from the Powder River Basin to British Columbia. “This is not about jobs versus the environment,” Dr. Russo said of the proposal to transport millions of tons of coal by rail from the Powder River to China via the Pacific Northwest, “that is a false choice. This is about who decides what kind of world will be left for future generations.”

The 18-foot totem pole was carved by members of the Lummi Indian community that is ground-zero for the impacts of the proposed coal terminal near Bellingham. “The Gateway Pacific Terminal would denature our waters and devastate an already fragile fishery,” according to Jewell James, Lummi community member, former Lummi Councilman and former Lummi Fisheries Director, and the carver of the totem pole. “This project would violate our treaty rights and destroy a 3,500 year-old village site. We, all of us, have to draw the line.”

Mr. James, who carved and transported totem poles to each of the 9/11 sites, believes that the journey will bring together tribes, agriculturalists, small businesspersons, the faith-based
community, civic leaders and organizations, and the general public. “This isn’t just about tribal
dights,” Mr. James added, “this is about the collective spirit, about silenced voices, the power of
local community, and the future of the place we all call home.”

Public events are being organized by tribes as well as local and regional organizations.
Events will be held at Otter Creek near Northern Cheyenne (September 18), Missoula
(September 19), Spokane (September 20), Celilo (September 21), Yakama Nation (September
22), Portland (September 23), Olympia (September 24), Tacoma (September 25), Bellingham
(September 27), and at the Tsleil-Watuth First Nation in British Columbia (September 29).

“So many people want to know how to stay involved,” Dr. Russo said. “At these events
we will offer them an opportunity to help make a difference.”

In Portland the Lummi will be welcomed by Paul Lumley, Executive Director of the
Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission.

Please note as a revision to earlier plans that the Portland ceremony will now take place
at Cathedral Park from 11:30am – 1:00pm on Monday September 23rd.

For more information by visit www.totempolejourney.com and
https://www.facebook.com/events/610692095620069/

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