



Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the
Treaty of June 9, 1855

For Immediate Release

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YAKAMA NATION CALLS FOR REMOVAL OF COLUMBIA RIVER DAMS

Tribe says it didn't give consent to dam construction as required by the Treaty of 1855

The Dalles, OR - The Yakama Nation today called for the removal of the lower Columbia River dams. In a joint press conference with the Lummi Nation, the tribe urged the federal government to reject the offensive doctrine of Christian discovery, which the United States uses to justify federal actions that impair the rights of Native nations.

The doctrine of Christian discovery is the legal fiction that by 'discovering' the Americas, Christian Europeans automatically acquired legal property rights in Native lands. Using this doctrine, Congress unilaterally authorized construction of the Columbia River dams without the Yakama Nation's free, prior, and informed consent as required by the Treaty of 1855.

"The false religious doctrine of Christian discovery was used by the United States to perpetuate crimes of genocide and forced displacement against Native Peoples," said Yakama Nation Tribal Council Chairman JoDe Goudy. "The Columbia River dams were built on this false legal foundation, and decimated the Yakama Nation's fisheries, traditional foods, and cultural sites."

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation ceded certain rights to more than 10,000,000 acres of land for the rights they reserved in the Treaty of 1855, including the right to fish outside the Yakama Reservation at all usual and accustomed places. The lower Columbia River dams inundated many of these usual and accustomed fishing sites and led to the decline of salmon, lamprey, and other traditional foods that Yakama Nation members rely on to this day. The tribe never consented to the construction of the lower Columbia River dams.

"Columbus Day celebrates the Christian-European invasion of our lands under the colonial doctrine of Christian discovery. Today, we acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' Day," said Chairman Goudy. "On behalf of the Yakama Nation and those things that cannot speak for themselves, I call on the United States to reject the doctrine of Christian discovery and immediately remove the Bonneville Dam, Dalles Dam, and John Day Dam."

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