



Confederated Tribes and Bands  
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the  
Treaty of June 9, 1855

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For immediate release:

October 6, 2021

## **YAKAMA NATION ADVOCATES FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL SITES; OPPOSES PROPOSED GOLDENDALE PUMP STORAGE PROJECT**

YAKAMA NATION AGENCY, YAKAMA RESERVATION – On Wednesday, October 6, 2021, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (“Yakama Nation”) met with Rye Development company, proponents of the proposed Goldendale Pump Storage Project (“Project”) to advocate for the protection of Yakama cultural, ceremonial, and traditional resources at Juniper Point. The Project’s proposed construction in the area known as *Pushpum* has exceptional cultural importance to the Yakama Nation, including nine archaeological sites, two of which are National Register of Historic Places-eligible and one multiple property documentation. “*Pushpum* has been a sacred site for Yakama ceremonies, legend, and the gathering of traditional roots and medicines since time immemorial” stated Tribal Council Cultural Committee Chair George Selam. The proposed Project includes two reservoirs exceeding 120 acres in surface area and 14,000 linear feet of rockfill embankment. The industrial-scale Project anticipates a generating capacity of 1,200 megawatts.

Yakama members continue annual gathering practices in the proposed development area for traditional foods and medicines. “For generations, regional utility infrastructure has been developed in the Yakama Nation’s Treaty-territory, blasting customary fishing sites, flooding traditional villages, and seeping radioactive pollution into subsistence and medicinal root fields” said Yakama Tribal Councilman Jeremy Takala. The Yakama Nation Treaty of 1855 with the United States reserved a 1.3 million acre Reservation for the exclusive use and benefit of the Yakama people and reserved rights to exercise usual and accustomed fishing, hunting, and gathering across the more than 10 million acre Treaty-territory of the Pacific Northwest region. Councilman Takala further commented, “For thousands of years Yakama culture and religion has balanced human stewardship of the land for generations yet unborn.”

Yakama Tribal Council Vice Chairman Virgil Lewis chaired the discussion, further noting “In the next ten years, the Pacific Northwest will be pressured by a multi-billion dollar energy industry for more infrastructure development. This new technology must be developed ethically without destroying the cultural resources and gathering sites that are part of the Yakama way of life.” The proposed Project license application was accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in June 2020 with anticipated regulatory review until 2023.

*For additional information or comment, please contact Yakama Nation Cultural Resources Director Jerry Meninick at (509) 865-5121, or Lead Attorney Ethan Jones at (509) 865-7268.*

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## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation is a federally recognized Nation pursuant to the Treaty of 1855 (12 Stat. 951); and

**WHEREAS**, the Yakama Tribal Council is the governing body of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, by the authority delegated by the Resolution of February 1944 and Resolution T-38-56; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tribal Council has the duty and responsibility according to the Resolution T-38-56 and T-10-61 to protect and preserve the Treaty Rights of the Yakama Nation, and

**WHEREAS**, centuries of oppression by the United States against Native Nations under the Doctrine of Discovery, affirmed by United States Supreme Court through *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, and implemented through Congressional policies of allotment and termination, have cost Native Nations hundreds of millions of acres of homelands of ancestral, spiritual, and ceremonial significance; and

**WHEREAS**, *Pushpum*, known as Juniper Point, is within the Yakama Nation's Treaty territory under Article I of the Treaty of 1855 and has been a site of religious, ceremonial, and cultural importance to the Yakama People since time immemorial; and

**WHEREAS**, *Pushpum* is a place where Yakama People continue to exercise Treaty-reserved rights to gather traditional roots and medicines under Article III of the Treaty of 1855 and has been a site of sovereign food gathering since time immemorial; and

**WHEREAS**, Rye Development proposes to construct an industrial-scale pump storage project at Juniper Point, including the construction of two reservoirs totaling 124-acres of surface area and more than 14,000 linear feet of rockfill embankments; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed pump storage development violates the Yakama Nation's inherent sovereignty and Treaty-reserved rights through direct, permanent, and adverse destruction of nine Traditional Cultural Properties of religious and ceremonial significance, and the reduction and elimination of access to gather food and medicine roots, which results in an irreplaceable loss of cultural resources and negative environmental degradation to several ephemeral waterbodies, and aquatic and terrestrial resources.

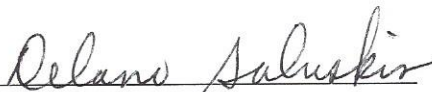
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Executive Committee of the Yakama Tribal Council, acting under authority delegated by Section III-A of the Rules of Procedures, approved by Yakama Nation Tribal Council Resolution T-10-61, dated July 13, 1960, and meeting at the Governmental Headquarters of the Yakama Nation, that the Yakama Nation opposes pump storage development at *Pushpum* to protect sacred religious and ceremonial places of inherent importance to Yakama culture.

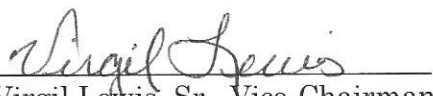
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Yakama Nation opposes pump storage development at *Pushpum* to avoid irreparable damage and destruction to the Yakama Nation's cultural resources and Treaty-reserved root gathering rights.

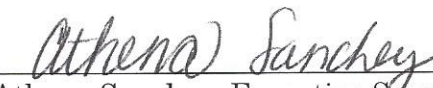
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Yakama Nation opposes all federal or state actions that authorize, approve, or permit extractive and exploitative energy technology that threatens to, or is likely to, damage or destroy Traditional Cultural Properties in the Yakama Nation's Treaty territory, including, but not limited to, on usual and accustomed lands and open and unclaimed lands where the Yakama Nation reserved and exercises its Treaty-reserved rights.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the Yakama Nation does not waive, alter, or otherwise diminish our Sovereign Immunity, whether expressed or implied, by virtue of this resolution for any and all administrative or legal action which may arise directly or indirectly from the same; nor does the Yakama Nation waive, alter, or otherwise diminish our rights, privileges, remedies or services guaranteed by the Treaty of 1855.

**DONE AND DATED** on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2021, by the undersigned members of the Executive Committee of the Yakama Tribal Council.

  
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Delano Saluskin, Chairman  
Yakama Nation Tribal Council

  
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Virgil Lewis, Sr., Vice-Chairman  
Yakama Nation Tribal Council

  
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Athena Sanchey, Executive Secretary  
Yakama Nation Tribal Council

Cc: File  
Cultural Ca#071-2021-10