



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Colville Tribal Court Rules On Andrea George Motion to Block Seating of Darnell Sam

Nespelem, WA—The Colville Tribal Court ruled March 5th on a motion filed by Andrea George to prevent the seating of Darnell Sam as a Nespelem District Council Business Council member, denying the motion and finding that “the CBC retains exclusive jurisdiction over who may maintain their position as a member of the Constitutional legislative body of the Tribes.”

The motion was filed March 1st by George in a matter already before the Court—her lawsuit filed in January against all of the CBC, three attorneys in the Office of the Reservation Attorney and CBC outside counsel; the complaint alleges, among other assertions, violations of George’s rights. When the suit was filed, George also filed motions seeking to prevent the Council from voting on a matter before it from the Rules Committee, and requesting an order to seal the record of her case. These motions were denied.

“I am appreciative that matters are ruled on in a timely manner by the Tribal Court,” Colville Business Council Chairman Rodney Cawston said today. “It is important that the legislative and judicial branches of our government continue to function efficiently and effectively.”

In its ruling on March 5, the Court noted that the Colville Constitution “expressly delegates to the Colville Business Council the authority to be the final judge of the qualifications” of CBC members. This ruling also referenced the Colville Constitutional provision regarding filling of vacancies, which states that “the Business Council shall declare the position vacant and appoint a member from the district affected to fill the unexpired term.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,535 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The tribes, commonly known by English and French names, are: the Colville, the Nespelem, the San Poil, the Arrow Lakes, the Palus, the Wenatchi (Wenatchee), the Chelan, the Entiat, the Methow, the southern Okanogan, the Moses Columbia and the Nez Perce of Chief Joseph's Bands.