



PRESS RELEASE

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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Colville Tribes Chalks Up Big Wins in 2019 Washington Legislative Session

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For Immediate Release

NESPELEM, WA – The Colville Tribes was successful in securing the passage of a number of bills and several million dollars in state appropriations in the 2019 Washington legislature, benefitting the Tribes and Tribal members, Rodney Cawston, Chairman of the Colville Business Council, announced today.

“We had several important victories in this legislative session,” Chairman Rodney Cawston said today. “This was the result of a lot of hard work by CBC members, our state lobbyist and Tribal staff. All in all it was a great team effort, and we now look forward to the implementation of these new laws.”

Cawston said this CBC was “probably one of the most active ever” in testifying before legislative committees and lobbying state lawmakers for the Tribes’ priority bills. “Council members really stepped up to make our Tribal voice heard in Olympia,” he said. “It was hectic at times, but well worth it.”

Several bills supported by the Tribes have either already been signed by Governor Jay Inslee or scheduled for signing into law soon. These include

- HB 1564, which provides a process for increased “encounter rate” funding for tribal nursing homes

- SB 5415, the “Indian Health Improvement Reinvestment Act, which will update payment policy for federal funding of Medicaid recipients who are American Indians and Alaska Natives
- SB 5511, legislation that provides funding for grants for broadband projects in rural and remote areas of Washington including Tribal reservations such as Colville’s
- SB 1485, a bill which changes the title “Chaplain” to “Religious Coordinator” for the Departments of Correction, Children, Youth and Families and Social and Health Services, allowing traditional tribal spiritual leaders to provide services to these entities
- HB 1713, improving law enforcement response to missing and murdered Native American women by establishing two positions including tribal representatives in the Washington State Patrol to build relationships between the and Washington Tribes to address this problem
- SB 5079, the “Native Voting Rights Act,” which provides a number of changes to encourage voting by Tribal members—putting ballot boxes on reservations, allowing the use of residential addresses other than street addresses for voter registration, and accepting Tribal ID cards for registration
- HB 2079, which creates a process for ongoing wolf-livestock conflict management and for other nonlethal wolf management efforts
- HB 1579, implements recommendations from the Southern Resident Killer Whale Task Force, which are intended to increase the number of Chinook Salmon in waters in Washington

Cawston said that in addition to this legislation, the Colville Tribes was specifically awarded \$4.5 million to help build a new in-patient treatment center in Keller and more than \$500,000 for Tribal fish hatchery improvements, as well as \$500,000 for improved fish passage over Chief Joseph Dam.

“We are very pleased by these particular appropriations for the Tribes,” Cawston said. “The Keller Treatment Center is well on its way to becoming a reality, and we are continuing to be recognized by the state as a leader in fisheries science and production on the Upper Columbia.”

All in all, the Tribes successfully advocated for more than a dozen bills and in support of state appropriations requests which will benefit Colville particularly and Tribes Washington as a whole.

“It’s important to thank those CBC who worked so hard this session,” Cawston said. “Jack Ferguson met several times with our district representatives in Olympia and convinced them to put \$4.5 million in the House Appropriations budget state funding for the Keller Treatment Center. Andy Joseph, Jr. and Janet Nicholson spent long hours lobbying and testifying in support of HB 1564, which will mean increased federal funding for our Convalescent Center, saving approximately \$1.3 million that had been funded by tribal dollars. Our elders will benefit by receiving better care and improved services. These two CBC members also lobbied tirelessly for the passage of The Indian Health Improvement Reinvestment Act, a law which will increase health care funding and improve services for our members.”

“Susie Allen was instrumental in getting tribal language in SB 5511, legislation to provide more funding for broadband projects. The changes to the bill which she presented will make it easier for Tribes in rural and remote areas to get grant funding for critically-needed telecommunications projects on our reservation. Margie Hutchinson and Norma Sanchez worked to secure passage of the Native Voting Rights Act to assure Tribal voters can make their voices heard in state elections. Margie Hutchinson worked with the legislature to also recognize Tribal spiritual leaders as religious coordinators. Joel Boyd championed the bill to bring more law enforcement resources to bear on the problem of missing and murdered Native Women, and to meaningfully involve Tribes in this process. Karen Condon is on the Southern Killer Whale Task Force and provided important input to the deliberations of the Task Force to increase Chinook numbers in our waters. Jack Ferguson and I worked to secure passage the Wolf Management legislation, and I testified on a number of bills and appropriations relating to increasing fish passage in the Upper Columbia River.”

Cawston added Colville’s many legislative successes are the product of a true team effort by elected council and Tribal staff.

“Everyone on CBC, and our staff who worked behind the scenes, drafting correspondence and testimony and coordinating appointments with lawmakers in Olympia, deserves thanks for this impressive list of victories for the Tribes,” he said. “The Office of Reservation Attorney Alice Koskela, our lobbyist Mike Moran and Legislative Assistant Neeka

Somday were constantly monitoring bills, updating the CBC, and providing talking points, suggesting bill language, and making sure we were where we needed to be in Olympia for hearings and meetings. I want to thank everyone for their tireless efforts during the session and look forward to more successes on behalf of our membership and communities.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,520 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.