



## **PRESS RELEASE**

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

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### **Colville Tribes Joins Lawsuit to Protect the National Archives in Seattle**

NESPELEM, WA – The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation is proud to announce that it is partnering with the Attorney General of the State of Washington to sue to stop the sale or relocation of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Federal Archives and Records Center in Seattle. The United States has taken agency actions to facilitate the sale of the National Archives at Seattle and to scatter the contents to distant locations such as Missouri and California, without prior notice to, or consultation with, the Colville Tribes, the State of Washington, or other stakeholders. The Colville Tribes seeks to halt this relocation and maintain the vital geographic and cultural connection between these archives and the Colville people.

The National Archives at Seattle contains records that are unique and important to the entire Pacific Northwest and Alaska. These include tribal and treaty records, census and genealogical records, records related to the Chinese Exclusion Act, and records related to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Significant records pertaining to the Colville Indian Agency are housed at both the Records Center and Archives, including BIA records and other federal records of the Colville Tribes. While NARA claims these records will be digitized to facilitate remote access, a substantial portion of the records have not yet even been fully indexed. Relocation of these documents would hinder the Colville Tribes' ability to access documents that are crucial to the Tribes' legal and political history and vital to the assertion of tribal rights.

The Chairman of the Colville Tribes, Rodney Cawston, said, "It is imperative that the Colville Tribes has access to its history. These records tell the story of our people and allow us to assert our rights even today. It is our obligation to preserve them and pass them along to the generations to come."

Chairman Cawston continued, “The federal government is mandated to consult with tribes on matters which might negatively impact tribes. This consultation did not occur in regard to the closure of the National Archives in Seattle. In a virtual meeting with NARA after their decision to relocate the facility was made, the Colville Business Council opposed the decision and offered suggestions for other solutions, which were not considered. The Colville Tribes is grateful to the Attorney General of the State of Washington for their partnership on this lawsuit, and also to the many other tribes and concerned entities that are joining us in this important cause. Together we will prevail and preserve the cultural and historical heritage of the Pacific Northwest.”

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About the Colville Tribes:

Today, more than 9,461 descendants of 12 aboriginal tribes of Indians are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes of the Colville. The twelve tribes which compose the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation include: ščəlám̓xəx̓w (deep water) or Chelan; walwáma (Wallowa people) or Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce; s̓x̓w̓y̓ʔilp (sharp pointed trees) or Colville; šntiyátk̓wəx̓w (grass in the water) or Entiat; sn̓ʔáyckst (speckled fish) or Lakes; mətx̓w (blunt hills around a valley) or Methow; škwáxčənəx̓w (people living on the bank) or Moses-Columbia; nspilm (prairie) or Nespelem; uknaqin (seeing over the top) or Okanogan; palúšpam (people from Palouse) or Palus; sənp̓ʔw̓ilx (grey mist as far as one can see) or San Poil, and šnp̓əšq̓w̓áwsəx̓w (people in between) or Wenatchi.