

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS  
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE:  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

REPUBLICAN LEADER,  
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND  
COMMERCE

## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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WHITMAN

July 8, 2019

The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva  
Chairman  
United States House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member  
United States House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop,

I write today in support of S. 216, the *Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation Equitable Compensation Act*. S.216 provides equitable compensation for the Spokane Tribe of Indians for catastrophic losses attributed to the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. This is a long-standing issue that I hope to see resolved as soon as possible.

The Spokane Reservation is located within my district in eastern Washington state, at the confluence of the Spokane and Columbia Rivers. These two rivers original beds and banks are expressly and legally part of the Reservation and remain in Tribal ownership today. The Tribe's life, culture, economy, and religion center around the rivers, and the Tribe had depended heavily on the rivers historic salmon runs prior to construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. With the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam, over the past 70 years, there has been a systemic destruction of the Spokane Indian people's way of life due to repeated flooding of tribal lands and impacts on salmon runs.

Since its construction, the Grand Coulee Dam has provided extraordinary benefits, not just to the Northwest but to our entire country. Meanwhile, the Spokane Tribe and its members have lost land, burial sites, access to rivers, and historic trading routes, and experienced forced physical relocation of households due to construction of this facility. The inability of the Spokane Tribe to receive just compensation for the seizure of their lands has severely impacted the ability of the Tribal government to provide for the historic cultural practices of their people.

S. 216 passed the Senate on June 27, 2019, and has received support from the Trump administration, the Bonneville Power Administration, the surrounding counties, and other local entities. The Spokane Tribe has taken great strides to compromise with the United States government, eliminating the backpay

1035 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-2006  
FAX: (202) 225-3392

10 NORTH POST STREET, SUITE 625  
SPOKANE, WA 99201  
(509) 353-2374

555 SOUTH MAIN  
COLVILLE, WA 99114  
(509) 684-3481

26 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 2  
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362  
(509) 529-9358

[www.mcmorrisrodgers.house.gov](http://www.mcmorrisrodgers.house.gov)  
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consideration from the legislation, while continuing to seek annual payments from the Bonneville Power Administration for the use of tribal land. The Bonneville Power Administration notes that the annual payments "will not result in perceptible rate impacts to its utility customers." I ask that you support expeditious consideration and passage of S.216, and I look forward to working with you to see this bill signed into law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy McMorris Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cathy" being the most prominent.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers

Member of Congress