



Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe



Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

July 14, 2022

Representative Derek Kilmer
2059 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Email:

Re: Support for the Transfer of Lands to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe in Trust and Reservation Status

Dear Representative Kilmer:

As the Chairmen of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, we respectfully urge Congress to transfer to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, in trust and reservation status, the lands outside of Olympic National Park boundaries that the Interior Department acquired to carry out the removal of the two Elwha River dams. For generations, the Lower Elwha Klallam have worked toward the removal of the dams that decimated the once legendary salmon runs on the Elwha River. As sister tribes, we rejoiced with Lower Elwha Klallam when the dams were breached in 2011 and fully removed in 2014.

The Klallam/S'Klallam are salmon people and the Elwha River is part of the historical fishing grounds for all three S'Klallam Tribes. Our support is thus contingent on retaining the right of the Port Gamble and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribes to access and fish the Elwha River in this area of proposed trust and reservation status. Absent this explicit recognition, the Port Gamble and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribes would have concerns that this land into trust transfer could abrogate their treaty fishing rights and access rights to the banks of the river. In addition, the lands transfer would implicate the other Tribes treaty hunting and gathering access rights. Thus, these issues would need to be resolved.

The Treaty of Point No Point of 1855 recognized all three Tribes reliance on fishing for our livelihoods and promised to protect our access to our fishing grounds and our fish. That promise was broken in 1911 when the Elwha Dam was built and 45 miles of upstream river habitat was cut *off*.

The valley inundated by the Aldwell Reservoir included the lower Elwha Klallam Tribe's creation site and the village of Tee-tee-ulth located near the confluence of Indian Creek and the Elwha River, a location abundant with fisheries of all five salmon species as well as Steelhead trout. Members of the lower Elwha Klallam descend from the Klallam that called Tee-tee-ulth home.

Representative Kilmer

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The land acquired by the National Park Service for the removal of the Elwha Dam encompasses this reach of the Elwha River valley. After decades of advocating for the removal of the dams and working tirelessly to restore the Elwha River ecosystem and its fisheries since removal, there is no entity more deserving of the lands that are to be transferred by this legislation than the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. We wholeheartedly support our sister Tribe and urge the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,



W. Ron Allen, Chairman
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe



Jeromy Sullivan, Chairman
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe