



# MUCKLESHOOT TRIBAL COUNCIL

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July 12, 2019

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
Chairman  
House Committee on Judiciary  
2141 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Judiciary  
2141 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Epidemic

Dear Chairmen Nadler and Grijalva and Ranking Members Collins and Bishop,

On behalf of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (“Tribe”), I am writing to request that the Committee on the Judiciary and Committee on Natural Resources conduct a joint field hearing in Washington State on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (“MMIW”) epidemic.

The MMIW crisis is a heart-wrenching problem impacting Indian country. Over recent decades, thousands of American Indian and Alaska Native (“AI/AN”) women have disappeared. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among AI/AN women and that rates of violence on reservations can be up to ten times higher than the national average.

This crisis is plaguing Washington State at an alarming rate. A 2018 report by the Urban Indian Health Institute found that Washington State ranked second in the nation for the number of MMIW cases (71 cases). Further, the study determined that Seattle was the city with the highest number of MMIW cases (45). This is extremely concerning for the Tribe considering we are located less than 30 miles from Seattle.

While there is no single cause for the high rates of MMIW, experts suggest several explanations, including jurisdictional barriers; lack of cross-jurisdictional communication and planning; failure to adequately fund tribal justice systems; and the targeting of Native women by sex traffickers.

Legislation pending in the Judiciary and Natural Resources committees, including Savanna's Act (H.R. 2733) would help address the MMIW crisis. Savanna's Act, introduced by Representatives Norma Torres, Deb Haaland, and Dan Newhouse, would increase coordination among all levels of law enforcement; increase data collection and information sharing; and empower tribal governments with the resources needed in cases involving MMIW.

In closing, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe strongly encourages the Committee on the Judiciary and Committee on Natural Resources to conduct a joint field hearing in the State of Washington on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women epidemic and related legislation.

Respectfully,



Jaison Elkins  
Chairman  
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

CC: The Honorable Ruben Gallego, Chairman, House Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States

The Honorable Paul Cook, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources' Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States