

Rep. Rick Larsen Statement for the Record
Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States
Legislative Hearing- June 5, 2019
H.R. 2961, Samish Indian Nation Land Reaffirmation Act

- Thank you Chair Gallego and Ranking Member Cook for including my legislation, H.R. 2961, the *Samish Indian Nation Land Reaffirmation Act*, on the agenda for this Subcommittee legislative hearing.
- Washington state's Second Congressional District is home to many sovereign tribes whose history in the Pacific Northwest is critical to the region's character and makeup.
- For years, I have worked with tribes across Northwest Washington to support efforts to build local economies and preserve sites of cultural and historical significance.
- Among these tribes is the Samish Indian Nation, who reside in the Pacific Northwest and have worked tirelessly to provide services and ensure a better future for its members.
- The Samish have long sought for the Interior Department to take land into trust on behalf of the tribe. Last November, after nearly a decade-long analysis, the Bureau of Indian Affairs ("the Bureau") Northwest Regional Director approved the Samish's application to take 6.7 acres of the Campbell Lake South land into trust. This land is contiguous to the tribe's existing 79 acres.
- Taking this small parcel of land into trust will help the Samish create better access to existing trust lands and support a developing foundation to preserve vital community services and give tribal members certainty about the tribe's future.
- To demonstrate my support for the Bureau taking the 6.7-acre Campbell Lake South land into trust, I introduced *the Samish Indian Nation Land Reaffirmation Act* (H.R. 2961).
- This legislation intends to only reaffirm the Bureau of Indian Affairs taking the 6.7-acre parcel into trust on behalf of the Samish Indian Nation.
- I would like to thank Representatives Gallego, Cook, Cole, Cardenas, Torres, McCollum, LaMalfa, Mooney, Moore, Gomez, Ruiz and Soto for cosponsoring this legislation.

- I would also like to recognize Chairman Tom Wooten of the Samish Indian Nation, for his partnership and support of this legislation.
- This legislation is also supported by the Skagit County, Washington Board of Commissioners and the Mayor of Anacortes, Washington.
- Recently, I heard from other Northwest Washington tribes about this legislation and I am aware of their concerns regarding the Bureau’s land trust approval analysis, also known as the “Carcieri analysis.”
- Most notably, I became aware of issues regarding an ongoing appeals process, successor in interest concerns, treaty rights and the Bureau’s analysis methodology.
- I look forward to working with the Samish Tribe and other local tribal leaders to ensure the legislation reaffirms taking the 6.7-acre Campbell Lake South parcel into trust without undermining the rights of other tribes.
- The Samish Indian Nation is one of many tribes nationwide who should have the ability to protect and preserve their culture and traditions for future generations.
- Putting land into federal trust is only one step the United States can take in attempting to make amends with tribes across the country.
- Again, I appreciate the Subcommittee taking the time to ask questions about this legislation. I look forward to working with you, the Samish Indian Nation and other tribes to improve the bill.
- I ask for unanimous consent that my comments be entered into the record.

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