



Statement of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe

*House Natural Resources Committee
Indigenous Peoples of the United States Subcommittee
“Tribal Infrastructure: Roads, Bridges, and Buildings”
July 2019*

The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe (Tribe) is a sovereign nation comprised of over 1,200 citizens, located on Kitsap Peninsula in Northwest Washington State. We thank the Subcommittee for holding this important hearing and are submitting our statement for the record as an initial step in working with you toward meeting our many, significant infrastructure needs and to spur congressional and administrative action on enhancing and renovating Indian Country infrastructure.

Infrastructure assistance to tribes should be the first and highest priority for federal infrastructure funding since it is a necessary part of fulfilling the federal Indian trust responsibility. Funding for infrastructure also adds meaning and reality to the federal government's support of tribal sovereignty, self-governance and self-determination. Yet tribal communities lag behind their non-tribal neighbors when it comes to infrastructure and often are unable to afford to provide the same level of facilities and service to their communities.

Tribes require the same types of infrastructure that state and local governments require—like roads, sewer and water, housing, and government and community buildings and facilities. But, Tribes also require infrastructure directly related to the practice of treaty rights, like boat ramps for fishing vessels. The federal government helps state and local governments as well as tribes with some of this infrastructure. Tribes, however, do not often have access to the other productive, reliable funding sources that states and local governments have, like property taxes, local improvement districts, municipal bonds, and sales taxes. Additional federal funds will make the difference between vital projects happening or not happening and tribal communities getting the infrastructure they need to survive and thrive in the modern era. Without modern, functional and safe infrastructure, Indian reservations will not live up to the promise of permanent tribal homelands as intended under the treaties.

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Current and Future Infrastructure Needs

In the sections that follow, we presents a sample of our high-priority infrastructure needs. As you can see, we have a number of shovel-ready, or near shovel-ready, infrastructure projects that are much-needed. Unfortunately, we currently do not have the funds to undertake them. We provide this sample of projects with the anticipated costs to help the Subcommittee understand the breadth of our infrastructure needs.

Infrastructure Needed to Develop New Housing:

More than 100 Tribal members and their families are on a waiting list for a housing site on our Reservation, but there are no available lots because we have not been able to develop the necessary infrastructure to support those lots. The Tribe has had conceptual plans from 2007 for three new neighborhoods on the reservation totaling over 100 lots, but due to limited funds and competing needs we have not been able to develop these neighborhoods at anywhere near the pace necessary to keep up with our housing needs. It is currently very expensive to design and build a new residential neighborhood, or any construction project, in the Seattle area due to the booming construction market.

Current housing projects include the East Salmonberries Subdivision. The Tribe is soon to go out to bid on construction of a new neighborhood, which will partially address the pent-up demand for housing on the reservation. The Tribe anticipates that construction costs of this project will total between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000 and total project costs will be between \$8,000,000 and \$9,000,000.

Future housing projects include the North Kloomachin Subdivision. The North Kloomachin project is in the early planning stages but the Tribe is moving forward with advance planning for sewer and water systems. The demand for this neighborhood exists right now. The Tribe estimates that design and construction costs for this project will total about \$12 million.

Infrastructure Needed to Support Provision of Essential Governmental Services:

Government and community services provided by the Tribe include police, courts, health and dental clinics, sewer and water utilities, early childhood and adult education, children and family services, natural resource management and enforcement, a library serving the Tribal and non-tribal communities, and government administration. The Tribe's government and community services are currently delivered out of antiquated offices scattered across the reservation and beyond. This adds challenges and expense to the delivery of Tribal services.

The Tribe adopted a needs analysis and Master Plan for our administrative campus in 2014 that will centralize and modernize the buildings from which we deliver services to its membership. Building out the Master Plan, including the necessary infrastructure elements, will be very expensive.

Implementation of the Master Plan has been a priority and the Tribe is currently designing the new Health and Wellness Center, which will be the first step towards building out the plan. The Health and Wellness center will be an approximately \$12,000,000 project overall.

The other projects called for in the Master Plan are very important as well and they become more challenging to pursue as their costs escalate with the local construction market. The plan calls for:

- Justice center building for courts and police (\$8.3 million estimated 2018 construction cost),
- Natural resources building (\$5 million estimated 2016 construction cost),
- Gymnasium (\$2.2 million estimated 2014 construction cost)
- Administration building (\$5.2 million estimated 2014 construction cost), and
- Community center (\$7.3 million estimated 2014 construction cost).

Another Tribal administration project that will provide critical infrastructure for the Tribe's internal and external IT systems is a data center and redundant fiber optic data line. The data center will provide a secure building for the Tribe's main servers and fiber optic connection between the Tribal network and the outside world. This project also provides a redundant data line from the data center to the Tribal administration campus that will help keep the Tribe connected in the event of emergency or disaster. The project has a \$300,000 estimated cost in 2018 dollars.

Existing Water and Sewer Systems and the Need for Maintenance and Updates:

The Tribe owns, operates and maintains its own sewer and water systems, which serve all Tribal homes and Tribal government buildings on our Reservation. These systems require constant and expensive maintenance and repair to serve existing needs, and even more expensive updates and improvements to serve new development as it comes on line. Projects on the horizon include:

Sewer Pump Stations and Sewer Line Replacement Project. The Tribe recently constructed a new wastewater treatment facility to replace an aging facility that was past its useful life and threatening Tribal waters. With the new facility built, the challenge now is to upgrade a series of pump stations and sewer lines on the reservation that are connected to the new sewer facility. These pump stations and sewer lines are nearing their end of useful life. The estimated 2016 cost is approximately \$5 million to upgrade the pump stations and sewer lines.

Water System Plan. The Tribe is currently having a Water System Plan prepared, which will identify deficiencies and needed water system improvements. Based on the age and complexity of parts of the water system, the Tribe anticipates that the projects that will be called for by this plan will total in the millions of dollars.

Transportation Infrastructure Needs:

The Tribe strives to provide safe roads and pedestrian walkways for the Tribal and non-tribal communities local roadways serve. Like other jurisdictions, the Tribe builds and maintains the critical infrastructure required for our resident community, including roads, trails, and sidewalks. Tribal roads are part of the larger network of county and state roads, and the surrounding non-tribal community uses them as they pass through the Port Gamble S'Klallam Reservation.

Adequate funding is necessary for maintaining critical infrastructure but also for planning transportation improvements and future roads for continued growth and economic development. The Tribe has a number of pressing transportation safety projects. Traffic signalization and pedestrian safety improvements are especially important. The Tribe has a Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program calling for a number of priority projects including:

- A sidewalk/pedestrian path along Little Boston Road, the main arterial through our Reservation, in order to get pedestrians out of the roadway. Estimated 2013 project cost is \$4.5 million.
- Administration campus pedestrian safety and circulation improvements. Estimated current project cost is \$2.2 million.

- Traffic signal at the intersection of Little Boston Road and Hansville Road (site of a number of fatal crashes). Estimated 2018 project cost is \$900,000.
- Traffic signal and left turn lane improvements at Hansville Road and NE 288th Street. Estimated project cost is \$2.4 million

Infrastructure Needs for Natural Resources:

Access to natural resources is an essential component of exercising our Treaty rights. Commercial fishing is also an important economic sector for the Tribe. In order to facilitate such access, we need additional infrastructure.

New Boat Ramp and Dock. The Tribe recently tore down an aging dock structure that was used by commercial fishermen for fishing activities. Right next to it is a boat ramp, also accessible by commercial fishermen, that is unusable due to age, erosion, and general wear and tear. The Tribe has engineered a new dock and boat ramp and is pursuing construction. Estimated 2016 costs for construction and environmental mitigation are \$5.5 million.

Conclusion:

Thank you for the opportunity to present these infrastructure needs for the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. As you can see, we have many necessary projects, and they are costly. We need your help to address our needs, and such help must include additional funding. No matter what infrastructure initiative takes shape in this Congress, we want to make sure our aforementioned projects are included in it and that Indian Country's overall needs are covered in it as well. Please do not hesitate to contact Joe Sparr, Planning Director 360-297-6354 jsparr@pgst.nsn.us at our Tribe if we can provide additional information that will assist you in this work.

Respectfully,



Jeromy Sullivan
Tribal Chairman