



Confederated Tribes and Bands  
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the  
Treaty of June 9, 1855

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**\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\***

It is a historic day - a day of recognition for the Yakama Nation. For decades our Nation has been denied basic rights of self-governance within our own lands. Today marks an important step toward righting that wrong.

This morning at National Congress of American Indians Convention held at San Diego CA, United States Department of Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Washburn announced his approval of the Yakama Nation's petition for retrocession of civil and criminal jurisdiction from the State of Washington. Washington's Governor Inslee proclaimed support for the Yakama Nation in January 2014 – and after nearly two years of review by the Departments of Interior and Justice, Mr. Washburn has agreed.

“I feel good in my heart. I rejoice with our current and past Leaders, and with our Yakama People.” Yakama Nation Tribal Council Chairman Chi Qwax (JoDe Goudy) responded.

In six months, the State will no longer be a principal authority on lands reserved for the exclusive use and benefit of the Yakama people. In 1855, the United States promised to hold these lands and protect them from incursion. The Yakama Reservation was first allotted, and then property passed out of ownership of the Yakama Nation. In 1963, the State of Washington unilaterally asserted jurisdiction in Indian lands including the Yakama Reservation – a move expressly in violation of the State Constitution.

In 2012 the Washington legislature, at the urging of Senator John McCoy (38<sup>th</sup> Dist., D.) established a process by which the Yakama Nation, or any other Tribe in the State, could petition

for return of their jurisdiction. The Yakama Nation filed a voluminous Petition, and after eighteen months of discussion Governor Inslee proclaimed his support.

Today, we approach a return to the promises of the Treaty and our ability to protect the people and lands of the Yakama Nation under our own sovereign authority.

It is truly a great day for the Yakama People.