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Tribes Nation-Wide Support Yakama Nation to Protect Sacred Site *‘National Congress of American Indians’ the Latest to Express Opposition to the Proposed Goldendale Pumped Storage Project; Calls On Gov. Inslee To Deny Permits*

Washington, D.C. –On Tuesday, February 20th, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) adopted an emergency resolution asking Washington State Governor Jay Inslee to deny permits for the pending project that threatens a Yakama Nation culturally sacred site that tribes have been fighting to save. For centuries, Yakama ancestors up until current day descendants use the area known indigenously as *Pushpum*, to gather foods and medicines that are honored through annual ceremonies. The Yakama understanding is that these ceremonies must be honored to maintain the balance of the natural environment, or the surrounding resources will cease to exist. The proposed hydropower development project located at Juniper Point, Washington would excavate and blast nine archaeological sites for the purpose of creating 124 acres of new reservoir surface area.

NCAI, the oldest and largest organization made up of American Indian/Alaskan Native governments, President Fawn Sharp stated, “NCAI works aggressively to defend the rights of all Tribal Nations and today, as the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation advocate to protect territory and sacred sites in Juniper Point, Washington—or Pushpum—NCAI stands firmly with and in support of Yakama in protecting all of our histories, properties and territories.”

While permitting decisions are still pending, the Washington Department Of Ecology published findings in December 2022 that the proposed project “would cause significant and unavoidable adverse impacts to cultural resources, as well as the Tribes’ ability to use [Traditional Cultural Properties] and gather culturally important plants.” Furthermore, due to the proposed project’s area of potential effect, no acceptable mitigation has been proposed to avoid the cultural and ceremonial losses to the Yakama Nation.

This resolution adoption comes after the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, (ATNI), an organization representing 57 member Tribes in the region, unanimously passed a similar resolution at the ATNI Winter Convention in January. “*Pushpum* has provided for the Yakama way of life for thousands of years through our traditional ceremonies and religious practices. We thank Native leaders and NGOs across the country who stand with us in opposing the state and federal permits for this energy infrastructure that would destroy this sacred land that is translated in our language as ‘Mother of Roots,’ and is uncoincidentally a natural seed bank.” Yakama Nation Tribal Council Chairman Gerald Lewis.

More information can be found here: https://yakamafish-nsn.gov/deeply_rooted or <https://yakamafish-nsn.gov/GoldendaleWaterPumpProject>

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