



For Immediate Release – December 13, 2022

## **Yakamas Fight for Hazardous Waste Cleanup at Old Landfill Site**

*Court holds the City of Yakima liable*

**Toppenish, Wash.** – The Yakama Nation Tribal Council applauds Judge Bastian’s Order and Judgement, issued today from the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of Washington, awarding \$295,000 in past costs to the Yakama Nation. The Court further provided that the City of Yakima is liable for Yakama Nation’s future costs incurred by the tribe for activities related to the cleanup of the Interstate 82, Exit 33A Yakima Landfill site. “The City’s old landfill has been seeping toxins and contaminants into the soil and groundwater for decades. Today’s Order ensures that Yakama Nation biologists and experts will have a role in the oversight of cleanup for the protection of our Treaty-reserved resources” stated Chairman Gerald Lewis.

The City of Yakima operated the unlined landfill facility between 1963 – 1972 for the disposal of solid waste. As a result of that activity ground contamination at the decommissioned site includes lead, chromium, arsenic, iron, heavy oils, nitrate, and other ground and groundwater contaminants. The Washington Department of Ecology began implementing an Agreed Order for clean-up in 2018 under state law. After nearly two years of failed diplomacy and negotiations, the Yakama Nation was forced to file suit against the City of Yakima in an effort to guarantee its participation in the oversight of cleanup efforts that impacted a historic Yakama village and over concerns regarding contamination impacts to natural resources in and around the Yakima River.

Chairman Lewis continued, “The Yakama Nation is always going to fight to protect natural resources in order to sustain the cultural practices of our people and improve life for our neighbors and future generations. In addition, the Yakama Nation is hoping to move forward in a more cooperative and respectful relationship with the City of Yakima on the cleanup of the old landfill site and restore the natural resources in that area.”

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