

## **Resolution to Support the Duwamish Tribe's Petition for Federal Recognition**

**A RESOLUTION** relating to the recognition of the dxʷdəwʔabš (Duwamish) Tribe as the original stewards of the territory on which the City of Seattle and the majority of King County resides, the Native American Indian host nation of the City of Seattle, and to officially support the Tribe's ongoing petition with the Federal government to acknowledge their status as a recognized tribe, which will bring our community one step closer to restorative justice from addressing the past and continuing traumas inflicted by the U.S. Government, including cultural erasure, violence, forced removal, and systemic oppression, while re-prioritizing the wellbeing of all Duwamish People as we actively work to continue dismantling oppressive systems and bureaucratic barriers to ensure a healthier society with a more just and equitable future for everyone.

**WHEREAS** we reside in the 46th Legislative District, which includes portions of the City of Seattle, which carries the name of the honorable siʔaʔ (si'ahl; Sealth; Seattle), Chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish Tribes, the lead signatory of the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, ratified by the 33rd Congress of the United States of America in 1859, allowing a legal justification for U.S. occupation and settlement on the ancestral territories of the Duwamish Tribe, upon which the Town of Seattle was incorporated first on January 14th, 1865, then later reincorporated as the City of Seattle, on December 2nd, 1869; and

**WHEREAS** on February 7th, 1863, the Seattle Board of Trustees passed Ordinance No. 5, which criminalized the presence of Indians in the City, calling for the expulsion of the Duwamish People from their homelands, resulting in the formation of a police force to enforce this Indian Ban, of which officially organized into the Seattle Police Department on June 2nd, 1869, and in 1873, the city passed an ordinance prohibiting "dissolute Indian women" from being present in the city at night; twenty years later, in 1893, the Duwamish village Herring's House, located at the mouth of the Duwamish River, was burned down by white settlers, and by 1914 every Duwamish longhouse in Seattle was burned to the ground, and the completion of the Ballard Locks spelled the end of the last Duwamish Villages at the Black River; and

**WHEREAS** the Duwamish Tribe, led by Chairwoman Cecile Hansen, has been seeking recognition since 1979, as a reaction to the Federal decision by Judge Boldt, denying federal recognition and treaty rights to landless tribes, such as the Duwamish Tribe, citing dis-continuous history as an organized tribe from 1915-1925, a time in which the Army Corps of Engineers opened the Ship Canal in 1916 draining Lake Washington by 25 feet, turning the Black River into a stream that could no longer support an abundant salmon population, a primary food source of the Duwamish People living in South Seattle, leaving them without a source of food or a mode of transportation which pushed tribal members away from Seattle, and then in 1918 the Spanish Flu pandemic arrived in Seattle, making it dangerous to gather elders, thus prohibiting regular tribal meetings; and

**WHEREAS** in 1983 the Duwamish Tribe formed a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization named Duwamish Tribal Services (DTS) to "promote the social, cultural, political and economic survival of the Duwamish Tribe, to revitalize Duwamish culture, and to share our history and culture with all peoples", which alongside community support, purchase three-quarters of an acre in 2008 to construct the Duwamish Longhouse & Cultural Center ([duwamishtribe.org/longhouse](http://duwamishtribe.org/longhouse)), which opened its public facility on January 3rd, 2009; and

**WHEREAS** the Duwamish Tribe was finally recognized by the Clinton Administration on Friday, January 19th, 2001, yet less than 48 hours later, the Tribe's recognition was suspended by the incoming Bush Administration, and has yet to be reinstated, effectively denying Duwamish Tribal

members their promised Treaty Rights, and restricting their access to federal support for health, education, and anti-poverty programs; and

**WHEREAS** the Duwamish Tribe has been an active advocate for environmental justice in the Duwamish River Valley ([duwamishtribe.org/environmental-justice](http://duwamishtribe.org/environmental-justice)), as the Tribe was a founding member of the Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition, the community coalition leading the cleanup effort of the superfund site to restore wildlife habitats in and around the original Duwamish Waterway, the section of the Duwamish River that was straightened to create a commerce channel for the Port of Seattle, which was effectively used as a dumping ground for toxic pollution during the City's industrialization period, from which legacy pollutants continue to leach from contaminated sediments and soils to this day; and

**WHEREAS** the Real Rent Duwamish grassroots social movement already has over 17,000 monthly contributors, and the Federal Recognition for the Duwamish Tribe petition already has over 65,000 signatures ([change.org/p/federal-recognition-for-the-duwamish-tribe](http://change.org/p/federal-recognition-for-the-duwamish-tribe)), with endorsements from The Seattle Times Editorial Board ([seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/federal-recognition-of-the-duwamish-tribe-is-long-overdue/](http://seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/federal-recognition-of-the-duwamish-tribe-is-long-overdue/)) and the MLK Labor Council ([mlklabor.org/news/why-unions-are-demanding-federal-re-recognition-of-the-duwamish-tribe/](http://mlklabor.org/news/why-unions-are-demanding-federal-re-recognition-of-the-duwamish-tribe/)).

**WHEREAS** Licton Springs, which is currently located in the 46th Legislative District, has historical and cultural significance to the Duwamish and neighboring tribes; and Native Youth of the Urban Native Education Alliance have recently begun efforts to recover the natural spring, bring awareness of the spring's significance, and to obtain designation as a historical landmark from the City of Seattle; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the 46th LD Democrats will endorse, advocate, and support the Duwamish Tribe's petition for Federal recognition. This support will be in the form of:

- Reaching out to the Duwamish Tribe to be in conversation and partnership
- Issuing a letter of support to Seattle's Congressional delegation, including Representative Pramila Jayapal, Senator Maria Cantwell, and Senator Patty Murray, as well as sending a letter to Secretary Deb Haaland and President Joe Biden urging their support to re-recognize the Duwamish Tribe.
- Signing on as an endorser to the Duwamish Tribe's petition for Federal recognition (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3BSJaUQIbeQYsyylm3htbSjt3cvSaIFcg0tQPcKkgWivzCA/viewform>).
- Asking our members to mobilize within their community to encourage family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors to join us in signing the:
  - Duwamish Tribe's Change.org petition for Federal Recognition for the Duwamish Tribe (<https://www.change.org/p/federal-recognition-for-the-duwamish-tribe>).
  - Urban Native Education Alliance's petition to Make Licton Springs a Historical Landmark (<https://www.change.org/p/city-of-seattle-make-licton-springs-a-historical-landmark-make-licton-springs-a-historical-landmark-89ca8e04-50d6-4198-ab3f-00cdd4e73e0f>).

Submitted by Kathy Kelly, PCO 46-2318, for consideration by the 46th District Democrats. Based on a resolution submitted to the 37th L.D. for consideration on October 11, 2021, Indigenous People's Day. Date of submission: October 20, 2021.

Additional sources:

- <https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/new-biography-of-chief-seattle-is-thorough-insightful-and-at-times-heartbreaking/>
- <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/federal-recognition-of-the-duwamish-tribe-is-long-overdue/>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/10/11/seattle-was-named-after-tribal-chief-now-his-descendants-own-less-than-an-acre-city-land/>
- <https://www.duwamishtribe.org/federal-recognition>
- <https://www.standwiththeduwamish.org/new-page>
- <https://crosscut.com/2019/04/north-seattle-native-people-reclaim-whitewashed-spring>
- Actions
  - <https://www.change.org/p/federal-recognition-for-the-duwamish-tribe>
  - <https://www.change.org/p/city-of-seattle-make-licton-springs-a-historical-landmark-make-licton-springs-a-historical-landmark-89ca8e04-50d6-4198-ab3f-00cdd4e73e0f>