



July 20, 2023

Via Email

Members of the City Council
City of Seattle

RE: Snoqualmie Indian Tribe's Request for Consultation on Tree Ordinance and Protection of Cultural and Archaeological Resource Trees

Dear Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe ("Tribe"), a federally-recognized sovereign Indian tribe with inherent sovereign rights and reserved rights as a signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855, I am writing to request that the City Council ask the Mayor's Office to immediately issue an Executive Order to pause implementation of the new Seattle Tree Ordinance to allow for consultation with tribal governments with respect to measures to preserve and protect culturally modified trees within the City.

As many of you know, the Tribe has been working to protect the "exceptional" western red cedar located at 3849 NE 88th Street which Tribal and State archaeologists have identified as a culturally modified tree ("CMT"). That particular cedar delineated an ancient indigenous trail system connecting Puget Sound to Lake Washington, and an archaeological site subject to special protections under Washington State law. The Tribe knows of other likely CMTs in the Wedgwood neighborhood, all of which face the risk of removal without adequate protection under City law. These are irreplaceable resources that must be protected.

When the City Council passed the new Tree Ordinance in May 2023, we have no evidence of outreach made to Indian tribes to consult on the Tree Ordinance. The City's website touts its respect for tribal sovereignty and collaborative working relationship with Tribal governments. Yet, here, the Tree Ordinance was written and passed without any input from Tribal governments. This is unacceptable. However, the City Council can act to ensure that this oversight is remedied quickly, and before other trees that are culturally and archaeologically important to tribes are desecrated.

The Tribe requests that the City Council ask the Mayor to exercise his authority to issue an Executive Order pausing application of the Tree Ordinance until meaningful government-to-government consultation takes place with tribal governments. This pause will enable the City and tribes to identify appropriate amendments to the Tree Ordinance. The development of comprehensive measures to protect other CMTs within the City must be addressed at the highest levels of City government with clear input from Tribal governments.



Please work with the Tribe's Executive Director of Governmental Affairs Jaime Martin (jaime.martin@snoqualmietribe.us) and the Tribe's Legal Counsel Rob Roy Smith (rrsmith@kilpatricktownsend.com), on the matters outlined above. We look forward to working with the City on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Robert M. de los Angeles

Robert M. de los Angeles
Snoqualmie Tribal Chairman