



Lummi Indian Business Council

2665 Kwina Road · Bellingham, Washington 98226 · (360) 312-2000

'Working together as one to Preserve, Promote and Protect our Sche Lang en'

December 7, 2021

Whatcom County Council
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225
council@co.whatcom.wa.us
<Sent via electronic service>

Re: Opposition to County Resolution

Dear Whatcom County Council Members:

As you may know, the Lummi Nation recently suffered historic flooding that significantly impacted practically every aspect of our lives. The catastrophic impacts caused by this flooding forced many of our people from their homes, cut us off from the rest of Whatcom County, and caused us to close our government to all but essential services. We are painfully aware of the impacts associated with the most recent flooding of the Nooksack and share the County's desire to reduce the negative impacts from future flooding. However, we do not support the resolution entitled "ELIMINATING THE BARRIERS TO REMOVING EXCESS GRAVEL FROM THE DRY LAND MEANDER ZONES OF THE NOOKSACK RIVER."

As the Council should be aware, fish habitat in the Nooksack River is currently unstable and thus is a limiting factor to the production of wild-spawning salmon. Furthermore, it inhibits the recovery of all three of our ESA-listed fish species. These fishes and the habitats necessary for their production are our treaty-reserved rights secured for us in perpetuity in the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855.

To be clear, the Lummi Nation has not been consulted on the proposed resolution and does not support floodplain gravel mining at this juncture. While the Lummi Nation is not opposed to the concept of gravel removal, we believe that it must be done in a comprehensive manner and that whatever plan is developed, after consultation and study, must demonstrate benefit to and restoration of native fisheries. In reviewing the proposed resolution, we find that it fails to meet these criteria. In the absence of convincing evidence demonstrating no adverse effects on our fish and considering the lack of well-developed monitoring and remediation plans, we cannot support the proposed work.

As I'm sure you will all agree, long-term flood management and salmon recovery planning are critical to the future of Whatcom County and the Lummi Nation. We believe a collaborative, cooperative approach based on sound science and informed by indigenous insight is what is needed. While we share the County's desire to mitigate the impacts associated with future flooding, we urge the County to take a measured and deliberate approach that takes proper account of the important ecological aspects associated with the functioning of the Nooksack River and the needs of the native fish.

Please feel welcome to contact me for further discussion or information about this matter. Thank you for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Jones Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

William Jones Jr., Chairman
Lummi Indian Business Council