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6406 Marine DR Tulalip, WA 98271

Phone (360) 716-4000

Fax (360) 716-0606

The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest in the Snohomish, Snoqualmie and Skykomish tribes and other tribes and bands signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliot.

June 1, 2011

The Honorable Larry Gossett
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

Tulalip Tribes would like to express strong support for the ordinance which would require anyone entering a major river in King County to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved Personal Float Device (PFD) through the summer recreational season.

Rivers are inherently dangerous places to recreate, especially in the springtime when flows are high, swift and cold. This year we are experiencing an unusually heavy amount of mountain snowmelt that may keep river flows high well into the summer recreation season.

The ordinance will proactively protect swimmers, floaters and boaters ahead of the warm weather recreation season when people are attracted to rivers. PFDs save lives. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that between 85 and 90 percent of drowning victims are not wearing life vests.

Tulalip Tribes has heard from many boaters in King County that river safety is of paramount concern. We understand that in a 2010 study of Cedar River recreational use by King County, it was found in sample observations that 61 percent of children (ages 1 to 11) and 98 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) were not wearing PFDs when floating the Cedar River. PFDs represent an excellent first step in keeping all recreators safe.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Abigail Hook", is written over a horizontal line.

Abigail Hook
Hydrologist
Tulalip Tribes