



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: A MOTION pledging support for efforts by the Duwamish Tribe to achieve status as a federally recognized tribe and urging residents of King County to join in bringing attention to and supporting efforts for Duwamish Tribe federal recognition.

Sponsors: Joe McDermott

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Clerk 02/16/2023

A MOTION pledging support for efforts by the Duwamish Tribe to achieve status as a federally recognized tribe and urging residents of King County to join in bringing attention to and supporting efforts for Duwamish Tribe federal recognition.

WHEREAS, the Duwamish people have lived in the King County area for time immemorial and the county's largest city carries the name of Chief Seattle, Si'ahl, who was chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish tribes, and

WHEREAS, Chief Seattle was the lead signatory of the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855, which led to United States settlement in the Salish Sea area, and

WHEREAS, on February 7, 1865, ten years after local tribes signed the Treaty of Point Elliott forcing cession of most of their land to white settlers, the Seattle Board of Trustees adopted Ordinance No. 5, calling for the removal of Native Americans from the city, and

WHEREAS, these policies forced many Coast Salish Indigenous Peoples to move from their ancestral homelands to reservations that generally lacked cultural connection and access to employment while others, including many Duwamish families, continued living on Duwamish aboriginal territory, which includes Seattle, Burien, Tukwila, Renton and Redmond, and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the King County council recognized the harm caused by this racist policy by proclaiming February 7 as Native American Expulsion Remembrance Day <https://kingcounty.gov/council/news/2015/February/native_expulsion.aspx> in King County, and

WHEREAS, the Duwamish Tribe, a treaty tribe, has been repeatedly recognized by the United States since treaty time, the United States government has continued to leave the Duwamish off of its official list of federally recognized tribes, and

WHEREAS, the United States government's official position on the Duwamish Tribe has been held in court limbo for two decades, and

WHEREAS, the federal government formally recognizes nearly six hundred other Native American tribes and bands, and

WHEREAS, federally recognized tribes have access to federal support for health, education and antipoverty programs, and

WHEREAS, without federal acknowledgement, the Duwamish Tribe is also denied tribal sovereignty and self-determination as part of a larger history of exclusion and the continual systemic erasure of Indigenous people, and

WHEREAS, despite setbacks, the Duwamish persist in their efforts to gain acknowledgement by which they could finally access treaty rights promised them one hundred sixty-eight years ago, and

WHEREAS, momentum is building behind their cause to federally restore recognition, marked by over twenty thousand Real Renters paying to support the vitality of the Duwamish Tribe, over one hundred thousand people signing a petition in support of Federal recognition, and a lawsuit filed by the Duwamish Tribe in May 2022 against the United States Department of the Interior to secure its tribal sovereignty that predates the founding of the United States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

That the King County council hereby pledges to honor and respect the Duwamish Tribe and endorse, advocate and support the Duwamish Tribe's fight for federal recognition status and urge all county residents to join us in bringing attention to and supporting the fight.