



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

June 10, 2019

Lummi Nation

RE: Support to free Tokitae and return her to the Puget Sound

Dear Lummi Nation,

The Seattle City Council is in support of your efforts to free Tokitae and bring her back to the Puget Sound.

We remember the tragedy in 1970 when many of our Southern Resident Killer Whales (*qwe lhol mechen* in the Lummi language) were stolen or killed. Tokitae was 4 years old at the time she was torn from her family and sold to the Miami Seaquarium. She is now 52 years old and the only killer whale still alive from that raid that devastated the Southern Resident population.

We are aware that the Lummi Nation is seeking to have Tokitae released and brought back to her family in the Salish Sea. We thank the Lummi people for their hard work to protect the environment and ensure a safe and healthy habitat for vulnerable species, including the Orca. There is much for all of us to learn from the Lummi people, who serve as an example of how to live in balance with the Salish Sea.

We know that the Lummi believe as their ancestors did that the Orca are part of their cultural patrimony, are a kinship relation, and consider families to be sacred. As such, it is their sacred obligation to bring Tokitae home, as she is an ambassadress of the Salish Sea. Moreover, as the Orca are fighting for their survival, the Lummi people are acting boldly based on their inherent rights and their sacred obligation to help them as part of their overall Salish Sea Campaign. The following words from your Sacred Sea website resonated with us:

“We have been called to bring Tokitae home. We realize that Tokitae’s story is important, but she is even more important as an ambassador for the Salish Sea. Blackfish are apex predators, and thus are key indicators of their ecosystem’s health. If we are to provide effectively for Tokitae and her family, we must restore the salmon runs and vitality of the Salish Sea. The peoples, cultures, and ecosystems of the Salish Sea are all connected, and they have long suffered the violences and stresses of colonialism. It is our task to work across cultures and borders, to heal the ecosystems, the economies, and communities of all those who now call this place home.”

We thank the Lummi Nation for your leadership and express our support for your efforts to repatriate Tokitae to the Puget Sound.

Sincerely,

Council President Bruce Harrell

Councilmember Debora Juarez



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

Sally Bagshaw

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw

Lisa A. Herbold

Councilmember Lisa Herbold

M. Lorena González

Councilmember M. Lorena González

Abel Pacheco

Councilmember Abel Pacheco

Kshama Sawant

Councilmember Kshama Sawant

Teresa Mosqueda

Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda

Mike O'Brien

Councilmember Mike O'Brien