



March 13, 2020

Greetings.

I'm Jeromy Sullivan, Chairman of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Our Tribe has been closely monitoring the situation related to COVID-19. Currently, there's a lot of uncertainty about this outbreak, its severity, and the impact it will have to communities around Kitsap County, Washington state, and throughout the United States.

What is known is that taking proactive steps now, while overall infections are low, can stop or slow the transmission of the disease, especially to the most vulnerable. This includes our Elders and those with compromised immune systems or chronic disorders. None of our community members have tested positive for COVID-19. All the tests we've sent out have come back negative.

Earlier today, Governor Jay Inslee expanded the closure of K-12 public schools. North Kitsap schools will be closed starting Monday through April 24. We're looking to minimize impacts as much as possible. To this end, we are working with the school district to provide meals for our students.

In addition, two- and four-year colleges throughout the state have been required to cease in-person courses. This includes Northwest Indian College, which is moving all classes online.

We are taking several precautions to protect our community. On Wednesday, March 18, we will begin limited operations of the Tribal government. This will be in effect through April 24. Essential services, including Health Clinic testing for COVID-19, and assistance as needed will remain available for our community.

Earlier this week, we implemented a 90 day restriction on all events and gatherings larger than 10 people on the Reservation. This means that General Council, Elders Honoring, and other annual community events taking place during this time period are cancelled or will be rescheduled.

We have also placed a 90 day ban on the use of Tribal facilities for private events. If you have a reservation during this time period, it has been cancelled.

During this time, we encourage Tribal and community members, and employees to limit any travel outside the area. Travelling right now, even within the United States, creates potential hazards that

could extend far beyond your personal health. This is a risk to our entire community, including our Elders and family members.

Simply put: postpone or cancel travel. This is an excellent opportunity to enjoy this beautiful area we call home. Go outside. Play ball with your kids. Garden. Start the home projects you've been looking forward to.

I do ask that you follow common sense hygiene practices like washing your hands, covering your mouth with tissues when you sneeze or cough, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

I also want to stress the need to limit close physical contact with others, including not giving hugs or handshakes. Family-style or buffet meals have been suspended at the Tribal Center and The Point Casino. We also want to encourage you to limit contact with elders, who we are asking to self isolate.

Our Clinic has a protocol in place for COVID-19 testing, but, like many facilities, are having difficulty obtaining basic supplies. With limited access to testing kits, they have put in place a strict screening procedure to ensure those who need the test can receive it.

If you have symptoms like fever, cough, or shortness of breath, please call the clinic to see about scheduling a test. These are happening at an isolated location away from the health clinic. Please do not walk into the health clinic if you have symptoms. Call first. If you are having difficulty breathing, please call 911.

All our lives are going to change for a while. It will be difficult, but necessary. Tribal Council and leadership are continuing to collaborate with health department staff to monitor this situation and make decisions to protect our community. This is my number one priority and I'm asking for your help. Consider your actions and how they might affect others. Wash your hands. Cancel travel. Stay home if you're sick. Most importantly, take care of yourself and your loved ones. If you need help, please do not hesitate to call the Tribal Center and ask. We're all in this together.