



Tribal Priorities Legislative Report

2024 Session



**SENATE
DEMOCRATS**
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

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Acknowledgements

The Senate Democratic Caucus (SDC) continues to engage with Tribal leaders and communities across the state. This session Senate Democrats listened to the legislative priorities of Tribal leaders and communities. The following report provides a snapshot of Tribal priorities for the 2024 legislative session.

Policy and appropriation highlights:

- **Addressing the fentanyl/opioid crisis**
- **Increasing access to health and wellness**
- **Advancing digital equity and supporting Tribal workforce development**
- **Improving education for Tribal students**
- **Protecting Indigenous women and people**
- **Investing in our climate**
- **Preserving and protecting natural resources & treaty rights**
- **Supporting co-management & Tribal consultation**
- **Supporting urban Indian community housing**
- **Investing in schools**

Please note, this report is not exhaustive and serves as a supplemental document highlighting major legislation and appropriations.

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP LIAISONS

It is an honor to serve as the Leadership Liaisons to Tribal Nations for the Senate Democratic Caucus. We had yet another successful year in our work to strengthen relationships and advocate for and with Tribal communities across the state.

Throughout the session, our caucus collaborated with Tribal leaders on a number of legislative issues. We are so grateful for their participation and continued engagement and are proud of what we accomplished together.

In our policies, we addressed several key issues facing Tribes in behavioral health — including the fentanyl crisis — housing, and education, all improving the daily lives of our children, families, and communities.

The state budget made critical investments in capital improvement projects focusing on Tribal behavioral health facilities, removal of fish barriers, and important climate solutions.

We look forward to the work ahead and thank you for your continued partnership.

Claudia Kauffman *Derek Stanford*

Sens. Claudia Kauffman & Derek Stanford
SDC Leadership Liaisons to Tribal Nations



PRIORITY LEGISLATION

We urged and supported the passing of legislation with lasting impacts on Tribal communities in and around Washington

Addressing the fentanyl/opioid crisis

SB 6099 Creates the tribal opioid prevention account.

SB 6228 Concerns treatment of substance use disorders.

SB 5906 Implements a statewide drug overdose prevention and education campaign.

SB 5804 Requires opioid overdose reversal medication in public schools.

HB 2396 Concerns fentanyl and other synthetic opioids.

HB 2112 Requires opioid and fentanyl prevention education and awareness at institutions of higher education.

HB 1956 Directs the Department of Health to launch a statewide drug overdose prevention and awareness campaign, including public education.

Increasing access to health and wellness

HB 1877 Improves the Washington state behavioral health system for better coordination and recognition with the Indian behavioral health system.

HB 2075 Requires the Department of Health to issue a license to operate an establishment to Indian health care providers that attest to meeting the state's minimum standards for licensure and pay a processing fee.

PRIORITY LEGISLATION

Advancing digital equity and supporting tribal workforce development

HB 1982 Authorizes the Community Economic Revitalization Board to make broadband loans and grants to governmental entities in rural and underserved areas for the purpose of economic or community development.

HB 2019 Creates an equitable pathway to apprenticeship by establishing the Native American Apprentice Assistance Program.

Improving education for Tribal students

HB 1228 Establishes grant programs for dual language education programs and tribal language education programs. Provides literacy supports for American Indian and Alaska Native students.

HB 2335 Strengthens state-tribal education compacts.

Honoring Sen. John McCoy's legacy

HB 1879 Names the curriculum used to inform students about tribal history, culture, and government after Sen. John McCoy (Iulilaš). This is the first time that Lushootseed will appear in Washington state statute.

Protecting Indigenous women and people

SB 6186 Requires certain public agencies to disclose information that could help law enforcement in MMIWP cases.

SB 6146 Creates a process for state law enforcement officers and places of detention to deliver fugitives to requesting Indian tribes. Creates a process for state law enforcement officers to enforce tribal arrest warrants.

PRIORITY LEGISLATION

Enhancing emergency management

HB 2135 Expands the Military Department's Emergency Worker Program to include members of federally recognized tribes.

HB 2020 Authorizes the Military Department to administer a program for emergency assistance to county governments and federally recognized Tribes that experience public infrastructure damage due to a natural, technological, or human-caused disaster.

Supporting natural resource co-management & Tribal consultation

HB 2424 Requires the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to engage with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation on a government-to-government basis to identify potential updates and recommend modifications to the 1998 cooperative fish and wildlife management agreement.

SB 6039 Directs the Department of Ecology to engage in a collaborative process that includes federally recognized Tribes to identify opportunities and risks associated with the development of geothermal resources.

SB 5884 Authorizes courts to order restitution for harm to natural resources or the environment following a criminal conviction related to water pollution, air pollution and hazardous waste management.

SB 5828 Authorizes superior courts to appoint water rights adjudications and referees. These commissioners must have expertise in water law and, once appointed, receive specialized training in water law, Indian law, water science, and cultural awareness. While applicable in every county in Washington, this will be particularly helpful in Whatcom County, which will likely be faced with an unprecedented number of water adjudication cases.

HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS

We highlighted budget area priorities that will greatly benefit Tribal communities



Protecting Indigenous women & people

Funding for MMIWP:

- to local jurisdictions to conduct DNA testing for unidentified remains. This will address the backlog of unidentified remains awaiting testing.
- to support the WA state Indigenous demographic data collection work group of the WA MMIWP Task Force.



Investing in our climate

\$2.5M to support a Tribal clean energy innovation and training center in partnership and co-located at Northwest Indian College. The center aims to support Tribal energy goals and pursue clean energy deployment opportunities that enhance Tribal energy sovereignty and well-being among Tribes.

\$5M to administer a program to assist community-based organizations, local governments, ports, Tribes, and other entities to access federal tax incentives and grants.

\$4.5M to administer a grant program to assist community-based organizations, local governments, ports, Tribes, and other entities to author federal grant applications and to provide support for federal grant reporting for entities that receive federal grants.

\$5M from the carbon emissions reduction account for a Tribal electric boat grant program. Federally recognized Tribes, Tribal enterprises, and Tribal members are eligible to apply for grant funds for the purchase of or conversion to electric motors and engines for fishing vessels.

HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS



Prioritizing behavioral health & wellness

More than \$45 million of the capital budget was invested in Tribal communities for behavioral health.

Facilities invested in include:

- Chehalis Wellness Center Renovation
- Colville Tribes Detox Facility Feasibility Study
- Jamestown S'Klallam Behavioral Health Center
- Kalispel Tribe Camas Health Inpatient Treatment Center
- Lummi Nation Substance Abuse Treatment (Bellingham)
- Muckleshoot We Care Daily
- Quinault Indian Nation Wellness Center Expansion
- Seven Nations Healing Lodge Youth Expansion
- Snoqualmie Tribe Behavioral Health
- Suquamish On-Reservation Health Service Center
- Yakama Nation Detox Center



Photo of the Jamestown Healing Clinic, courtesy of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Additionally, the operating budget included:

- Funding for a Washington state tribal opioid and fentanyl response task force.
- Funding to develop a process, in consultation with Tribal governments, for a grant program for federally recognized Tribes to conduct community-based health assessments.
- Funding for Behavioral Health Specialists to work with Tribal and nontribal children in the Mount Baker school district.
- Funding for a WSIPP AI/AN Breast Cancer Research Study.
- Increase in funding for the kinship navigator program in the Colville Indian reservation, Yakama Nation, and other Tribal areas.

HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS

Preserving and Protecting Natural Resources & Treaty Rights

- Funding to initiate the development of a statewide web map tool to integrate water resources management databases.
- Funding to convene a task force to make recommendations on integrating water, sewer, school, and port districts into the Growth Management Act planning process.
- Additional funding for capacity grants to federally recognized Tribes for consultation on clean energy siting projects.

Other capital funding went to various projects including:

- Nooksack Tribe geothermal study
- Lummi Indian Business Council energy projects
- Nisqually new full service park
- Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board
- Estuary & salmon restoration program
- Quinault legacy forest acquisition
- Squaxin Island Tribe blue carbon sequestration

HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS



Investing in Safety & Transportation

\$1M of the highway safety account to implement a multifaceted approach to supplement existing funding targeted at impaired driving and other enforcement. The areas of emphasis expected to be funded include additional high visibility enforcement and Indigenous knowledge-informed Tribal traffic safety support.

\$10.2M of the climate transit programs account is provided solely for Tribal transit grants.



Supporting Urban Indian Community Housing

Projects Include:

- Chief Seattle Club Monterey Lofts Renovation
- Seattle Indian Services Commission Native Village



Investing in Schools

Small district and Tribal compact school modernization.

NEXT STEPS

We look forward to keeping in touch with you as we prepare for the next legislative session. Please feel free to reach out directly to leadership liaisons Sens. [Kauffman](#) and [Stanford](#) and SDC Tribal liaison [Crys Florez](#) with any questions, comments, or concerns.

01

Meetings for Tribal Leaders + SDC Members

Creating meaningful opportunities for Tribal leaders to directly engage with SDC members.

02

Keeping In Touch

Maintaining regular communication with Tribal leaders and communities to stay apprised of current issues.

NOTES

THANK YOU

A big thank you to all SDC staff who worked to make this report possible.

CONTACT

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