



Confederated Tribes and Bands
of the Yakama Nation

Established by the
Treaty of June 9, 1855

August 21, 2020

Re: Yakama Nation's Endorsement Of Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis

To Whom It May Concern,

I write on behalf of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation to endorse Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis for the Washington State Supreme Court. As the first Native to serve as a State Supreme Court Justice, Justice Montoya-Lewis brings a background and perspective to the bench that has been sorely lacking throughout Washington's statehood.

Justice Montoya-Lewis's experience as a Judge for the Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, and Upper Skagit Tribe have afforded her an in-depth understanding of both tribal law and federal Indian law, which is essential to understanding the limited role that Washington State law plays in Indian Country. This experience makes Justice Montoya-Lewis uniquely qualified to recognize and uphold the Treaty and other inherent rights of the 29 sovereign Native Nations whose peoples have always lived in the lands now called Washington State.

Justice Montoya-Lewis clearly has the legal mind and acumen for the job, but more importantly she has the heart and compassion that our society needs from state judges. On July 10, 2020, Justice Montoya-Lewis read aloud the Supreme Court's decision to vacate its 1916 conviction of an enrolled Yakama Member, *atwai* Alec Towessnute, for exercising his Treaty-reserved fishing rights on the Yakima River. Speaking truth to our experience as Native peoples, Justice Montoya-Lewis correctly observed that injustices like the *Towessnute* conviction "continue to perpetrate injustice by their very existence."

Justice Montoya-Lewis's perspective has long been absent from the Washington State Supreme Court. We urge all enrolled Yakama Members, and all Washington State citizens, to support her candidacy to retain her seat on the Washington State Supreme Court.

Respectfully,

Delano Saluskin, Chairman
Yakama Nation Tribal Council