

# Chinook Indian Nation sends appeal to president

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**The action comes shortly before the tribe's First Salmon Ceremony in Chinook on June 19 and its annual membership meeting June 20.**

BAY CENTER, Wash. — In the latest chapter of their long quest to obtain official status from the federal government, the Chinook Indian Nation has appealed directly to President Barack Obama, seeking presidential intervention in the cause.

The action comes shortly before the tribe's First Salmon Ceremony in Chinook on June 19 and its annual membership meeting June 20, where representatives of the tribe's 2,700 members are expected to elect a new chairman to replace Ray Gardner, who died last year.

Acting Chairman Sam Robinson has said he will not seek the permanent office. Longtime Cultural Committee Chairman Tony Johnson is widely expected to run.

"Beginning June 8, a letter a day will be mailed through the U.S. Post Office to President Obama and also to former President Bill Clinton, under whose presidency we were officially federally recognized in 2001," according to a tribal press release.

The letter states, "In an outrageous example of the abuses perpetuated against our community, that life-changing 2001 recognition was taken away 18 months later by the administration of President George W. Bush. Our appeal will include daily supplemental materials to both educate our audience and illustrate the unbelievable nature of our nation not being counted amongst the other 566 tribes recognized by the federal government."

Gary Johnson, a Chinook Council member and former chairman, said the Chinook Indian Nation has demonstrated extraordinary patience.

"Despite a willingness to give up virtually everything that was ours, the 1851 treaties that we signed were not ratified by the U.S. Senate. A long history of broken promises has followed. One hundred sixty-four years is long enough. "Our teachings say it takes as long to fix a problem as it took to make it," Johnson continued. "Let 2015 be the year that we can begin our long road to recovery. No more of our members should be allowed to die while being denied their inheritance. We only seek what evidence and common sense say is right."