



LUMMI INDIAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

2665 KWINA ROAD BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON 98226 (360) 312-2000

DEPARTMENT _____

DIRECT NO. _____

To Friends of *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut*
from the
Lummi Nation

Greetings on Liberation of *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut* (aka Lolita) day:

We join in celebrating the knowledge that *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut*, Tokitae's tribal name recently given to her by the Lummi Nation, will come home to her Salish Sea. She has been held in unspeakably cruel conditions and treated as a profit center by her Seaquarium owners. She is a sacred being, not a commodity, and is a relative of ours. We know from our own history how it feels to have—or to be—a child stolen away from family. *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut* must and will come home to be reunited at last with her mother, Ocean Sun, and her relatives in the L-pod. She is not well and needs the healing of her home waters and the company of her mother, Ocean Sun, now the matriarch of L-pod. We know it will be a moment of great and profound healing for her, for her mother, for the L-pod, for the Southern Resident Killer Whale population, for the Salish Sea and all its peoples.

The Lummi Nation is working with its friends and allies such as the Orca Network, the Whale Sanctuary Project, Orca Wild, the Friends of the San Juans, the Sierra Club, and the faith-based community to provide her a sanctuary in her home waters for healing and for her reunion. We have underway the Salish Sea campaign to ensure through ceremony and science that her family is fed, that the Salish Sea waters are restored and protected, and that the salmon stocks are replenished. We will soon be convening a gathering of experts to put to rest Seaquarium's repeated claims that bringing her home represents an unreasonable risk. And we continue to press Seaquarium and its parent company through petitions, articles, documentaries, public events and totem pole journeys, inviting them to be part of the solution by working with us.

But we are also prepared to sue.

We are announcing today, July 27, 2019—on her special day—that Lummi tribal members who understand her to be part of their cultural patrimony will be filing a lawsuit to require Seaquarium return *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut* to her family. We have completed the necessary research and will suing for her return under the auspices of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). We have had the case vetted by experts in the field and by legal scholars who are guiding us in shaping this legal remedy. It is our hope that long before we secure a victory in the courts Seaquarium will see fit to do the right thing and meet with our inter-party delegation to negotiate the terms and conditions of her release.

The legal battle will require a total donation of \$125,000 to take it through a Circuit Court decision. We are asking her friends around the world to help as much as they can, as soon as they can, to help raise the necessary funds. Donations can be made through the website: www.sacredsea.org. All donations are tax-deductible and go directly to the Lummi Nation's *Sk'aliCh'et – tenaut* Fund.

If you have questions please call Dr. Kurt Russo by phone at 360-312-2292 or *via* email at kurtr@lummi-nsn.gov.

