



**NORTHWEST
PORTLAND
AREA
INDIAN
HEALTH
BOARD**

Burns-Paiute Tribe
 Chehalis Tribe
 Coeur d'Alene Tribe
 Colville Tribe
 Coos, Siuslaw, &
 Lower Umpqua Tribe
 Coquille Tribe
 Cow Creek Tribe
 Cowlitz Tribe
 Grand Ronde Tribe
 Hoh Tribe
 Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
 Kalispell Tribe
 Klamath Tribe
 Kootenai Tribe
 Lower Elwha Tribe
 Lummi Tribe
 Makah Tribe
 Muckleshoot Tribe
 Nez Perce Tribe
 Nisqually Tribe
 Nooksack Tribe
 NW Band of Shoshoni Tribe
 Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
 Puyallup Tribe
 Quileute Tribe
 Quinalt Tribe
 Samish Indian Nation
 Sauk-Suiattle Tribe
 Shoalwater Bay Tribe
 Shoshone-Bannock Tribe
 Siletz Tribe
 Skokomish Tribe
 Snoqualmie Tribe
 Spokane Tribe
 Squaxin Island Tribe
 Stillaguamish Tribe
 Suquamish Tribe
 Swinomish Tribe
 Tulalip Tribe
 Umatilla Tribe
 Upper Skagit Tribe
 Warm Springs Tribe
 Yakama Nation

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Via Fax – 202-224-5429

November 19, 2019

Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
 ATTN: Senator John Hoeven, Chairman
 838 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Support for Nomination of Rear Admiral Michael D. Weahkee as
 Director of the Indian Health Service**

The Honorable John Hoeven:

On behalf of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB), I strongly support the nomination of Rear Admiral (RADM) Michael D. Weahkee of the Zuni Indian Tribe, and ask that you support his confirmation as Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Established in 1972, NPAIHB is a tribal organization formed under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), P.L. 93-638, representing the 43 federally-recognized Indian Tribes in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington on specific health care issues.

NPAIHB's relationship with RADM Weahkee began when he worked at the California Rural Indian Health Board and continued through positions he held at IHS at the service unit and regional office level. In his role as Principal Deputy Director/Acting Director of IHS, he has proven that he is strong leader, capable and committed to improving the Agency and raising the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. He has successfully led the Agency forward in a very trying time, overseeing the development and implementation of a new five-year strategic plan for the Agency, the first in over a decade. He has pressed the Agency forward to address long-standing and unimplemented, external oversight recommendations from the Government Accountability Office and the HHS Office of Inspector General. He established and implemented a new Office of Quality at the IHS Headquarters level, to ensure appropriate management oversight and accountability by the Area Offices and federal service unit hospitals and health centers. In partnership with the Administration for Native Americans Commissioner, RADM Weahkee revitalized the HHS Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs, to provide a forum internally at HHS to discuss the needs and interests of Indian country.

RADM Weahkee has traveled extensively throughout Indian country, including to visit Northwest Tribes, to see and hear firsthand the challenges and issues that American Indian and Alaska Native communities face in addressing various health concerns. NPAIHB leadership have also had the opportunity to address

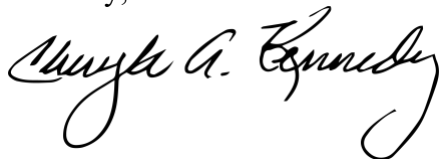
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
ATTN: Senator John Hoeven, Chairman
November 19, 2019
Page 2

RADM Weahkee on various issues through the tribal consultation process and other meetings.

Lastly, RADM Weahkee is a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served as a military public health specialist. He obtained his bachelor of science in health care management degree from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and both a master of health services administration and master of business administration degree from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. RADM Weahkee's experience in working with tribes, demonstrated leadership, and education strongly support his confirmation.

Thank you for your strong consideration of this endorsement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl A. Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'C'.

Cheryl A Kennedy
Vice Chair, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board
Chair, Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde