



Press Release

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
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Congress Votes to Return The Ancient One Home *The Bring The Ancient One Home Act on its way to the White House*

Mission, OR – Today, the U.S. Congress passed the Bring The Ancient One Home Act as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016. The bill, which directs the government to return the ancestral remains to Pacific Northwest tribes, will now go to President Obama who is expected to sign it.

“Our ancestor has been denied his right to a proper burial for twenty years,” said Armand Minthorn, Board of Trustees member for the Umatilla Tribes. “We are glad for this long overdue decision, our efforts will not cease until he returns to his people once and for always. We will rest when he can rest.”

“Thanks to the support of almost the entire Pacific Northwest delegation, it now looks like the Ancient One will soon return home,” said Aaron Ashley, Board of Trustees member and Chair of the Cultural Resources Committee for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), “When he does, we will both mourn and rejoice as he is finally laid to rest with our ancestors. After a very long time, this is a hopeful moment for our people.”

In 1996, the nearly nine thousand year old remains of the Ancient One, also known as the Kennewick Man, were unearthed. Since that time, the CTUIR have worked diligently to follow the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) process, but a lengthy legal battle ensued, costing taxpayers millions of dollars, and the repatriation promised under NAGPRA was never granted

In 2013, Dr. Eske Willerslev, Director of Centre of Excellence in GeoGenetics at the University of Copenhagen, and his team using new DNA techniques determined that the Ancient One is most closely connected by DNA to the Native people of the Columbia Plateau.

After the president signs the legislation, The Ancient One will be returned to the Pacific Northwest claimant tribes, including the CTUIR. The tribes will then place him at rest at an undisclosed location.

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