

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

PRESS RELEASE



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Sams Named to Oregon's Task Force on Tribal Consultation

MISSION, Ore. – Gov. Tina Kotek has appointed Corinne Sams, a Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Board of Trustees Member at Large, to the state's Task Force on Tribal Consultation.

As part of the 15-member body, she will help identify and clarify requirements for state agencies to maintain a just and respectful consultation process with federally recognized tribes in Oregon and hold the agencies accountable when cooperating with the tribes.

"Consultation is vital for the tribes and the states to understand one another's rights and interests," said Sams, whose term on the task force runs from March 7 to Dec. 31. "I am excited to accept this appointment and look forward to coordination internally to bring pertinent issues forward on the behalf of CTUIR. I applaud Oregon's commitment to a respectful and meaningful consultation process with the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon. This new task force will create a path forward, continuing to build upon our existing government-to-government relationships and ensuring state agencies honor tribal sovereignty, cultural competency and tribal voices for better outcomes across Oregon."

Kotek called Sams thoughtful and hard working whether as a CTUIR elected official or advocating for the Northwest Health Foundation and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

"The Task Force on Tribal Consultation will develop a plan on how the State of Oregon can develop stronger government-to-government relationships with all the federally recognized sovereign tribal nations in Oregon. I look forward to her work on this critical effort," Kotek said.

State and federal law requires state agencies to consult with the CTUIR; Burns Paiute Tribe; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw; Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation; Coquille Indian Tribe; Klamath Tribes; Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians; Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde; and Confederated Tribes of Siletz when making decisions that affect them.

However, Rep. Tawna Sanchez, D-Portland, who is Shoshone-Bannock and Ute, didn't think the law clearly defined what consultation was and how it occurred. So she filed House Bill 3173, which was passed and signed into law in 2023.

The law creates the task force to determine what meaningful consultation with tribes in Oregon should look like, the specific situations when it should occur and with whom.

When fully seated, the task force will have a representative from each of Oregon's federally recognized tribes, three lawmakers, a member of the Governor's Office and two members representing state agencies. Those joining Sams on the task force are:

- Tracy Kennedy, Burns Paiute Tribal Council chair,
- Natalie Ball, Klamath Tribal Council Member at Large,
- Bobbie Bruno, Warm Springs Tribes secretary-treasurer,
- Anna Richter-Taylor, Cow Creek Band tribal representative,
- Brenda Meade, Coquille Tribal Council chair,
- Dee Pigsley, Siletz Tribal Council chair,
- Doug Barrett, Coos Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians chief,
- Jon George, Grand Ronde Tribal Council member,
- Julie Johnson, Oregon Health Authority Tribal Affairs director,
- Rep. Tawna Sanchez, House representative,
- Sen. Bill Hansell, Senate representative,
- Patrick Flanagan, Legislative Commission on Indian Services executive director,
- Shana McConville Radford, Tribal Affairs director, Office of Gov. Tina Kotek.

One governor-appointed seat remains vacant.

According to the law, the task force shall submit a report that may include legislation recommendations to a Legislative Assembly interim committee no later than Sept. 15.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is comprised of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes, and formed under the Treaty of 1855 at the Walla Walla Valley, 12 Stat. 945. In 1949, the Tribes adopted a constitutional form of government to protect, preserve and enhance the reserved treaty rights guaranteed under federal law.

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Caption: Corinne Sams

