SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE

September 11, 2014

Gina McCarthy, Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Re: EPA Promulgation of Water Quality Standards for Washington State

Dear Ms McCarthy:

I am writing you as Chairman of the Squaxin Island Tribe and on behalf of the members of my Tribe. I want to strongly encourage the Environmental Protection Agency to begin rule promulgation for Washington state water quality standards, including fish consumption rates protective of Tribal fish eating people. This process must begin with all due haste so that we can protect future generations of Tribal members from the contaminants currently present in our treaty protected fish resources.

The Squaxin Island Tribe has been exceedingly patient and has worked exhaustively with the State of Washington to try to accomplish the objective of improved water quality standards. Unfortunately, it seems that the State is not up to the task of protecting all its citizens. They have repeatedly delayed efforts to update standards and have now suggested standards that will actually increase the cancer risk to Tribal members.

Squaxin conducted fish consumption surveys of its people over twenty years ago with the assistance of the EPA. We have attempted ever since to have these fish consumption rates reflected in state water quality standards. It still has not happened and another generation has been exposed to the elevated health risks of eating contaminated fish.

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Please, we implore you, act now to promulgate protective water quality standards. Our people have been waiting long enough to receive equal protection of the law under the Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,

David Lopeman, Chairman

C: Lisa Feldt, Acting Deputy Administrator
Ken Kopocia, Acting Assistant Administrator for Office of Water