

To my S'Klallam Tribal Members,

My name is Julianna Sullivan, and I am writing this letter to express my intent to run for Council Chairperson for our Tribe. I am the oldest grandchild of Melvin "Poe" Sullivan and Dianna Purser. My parents are Chad and Angela Sullivan. Having grown up on the reservation, the Little Boston Community is my family and has shaped me into who I am today.

I went to daycare in Kingston at the Teen Parent Childcare Center while my Mom and Dad finished earning their high school diplomas. Growing up as a snotty nose Rez kid, my parents would drop me off at the old elder's center to learn from Grandma Thelma Fulton, Grandma Ruth Martinez, and Grandma Maxine Whalbridge at the Foster Grandparent Program. My first Headstart preschool teachers were Aunty Connie Veregge and June Jones, where my Dad became their teaching assistant. I cannot emphasize enough the value these programs had on my life.

I went to Wolfle Elementary, Kingston Junior High, North Kitsap High School, West Sound Tech, and was the first graduating class of Kingston High School. I earned my associate degree at Northwest Indian College, which provided me with a science internship with the Tribe's Natural Resources Department, enabling me to begin building my career.

I started working as a field technician for the Point No Point Treaty Council while earning my Bachelor of Arts at The Evergreen State College. For the past ten years, I have worked as a marine biologist for the Tribe, a dream I had since age 9. I work for the Tribe's Habitat, Research, and Monitoring Program, where we grow shellfish for the Tribe and conduct research that drives ecosystem restoration and conservation actions within the Tribe's traditional hunting and fishing areas. I am very proud to be a part of a team that strives to improve the lives of our tribal community by protecting and enhancing access to treaty resources. Recently, as a result of a treaty harvest training project that I developed, I was inspired to continue my education. Last June, I earned my Master of Legal Studies Degree in Indigenous Peoples Law at the University of Oklahoma.

In addition to my formal education, I have been fortunate enough to have my family teach me how to exercise my treaty rights through subsistence harvesting and by participating in commercial fisheries such as crabbing, shrimping, and most recently geoduck diving. I would not dare declare myself as top dog in any level, but actively harvesting has provided me some insight on the unique perspective of our tribal fishermen.

If I am fortunate enough to serve as Tribal Chair, I hope to use the position to improve the well-being of our tribal community by focusing on the following:

Environmental protection – Protecting our environment is crucial to protecting the Tribe’s treaty rights and as Tribal Chair I will continue to work and remind our state and federal government of their responsibility to the protection of our treaty-reserved resources.

Economic growth – I will promote policies and business strategies that are culturally relevant to the S’Klallam People such as expanding direct seafood marketing opportunities and exploring other ways that the Tribe can help our community capitalize on the hard work that our treaty harvesters do.

At the heart of sustainable economic growth is the understanding and appreciation of a community's unique cultural identity and heritage. For the people of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, our rich traditions, history, and connection to the natural world, especially our bond with the sea, play a pivotal role in defining who we are. To foster authentic and lasting economic development, I will advocate for the promotion of policies and business strategies that deeply resonate with our cultural philosophy. Our treaty harvesters, through generations, have showcased unparalleled dedication and skill in harnessing the bounties of the Salish Sea. By fostering pathways that allow the Tribe to market these harvests directly, not only do we ensure fair economic rewards for our harvesters, but we also offer the wider community an authentic taste of the Port Gamble S’Klallam Legacy.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that our treaty harvesters represent just one attribute of our Tribe's industrious spirit. Beyond seafood marketing, I believe it is imperative to explore diversified avenues that can help our community capitalize on the hard work of all our members. By aligning our business strategies with our traditional values and practices, we pave the way for an economic model that is both progressive and deeply rooted in our heritage. This approach guarantees not just economic growth, but also the preservation and celebration of the Port Gamble S’Klallam way of life for generations to come.

Increasing educational opportunities – Education encompasses not only the structured learning we acquire through academic institutions but also the invaluable knowledge passed down through generations in the form of traditional skills and wisdom. As a champion of the comprehensive growth of our tribal community, I strongly believe in the continued support for tribal programs in higher education. These programs serve as critical channels for our young members to access advanced knowledge, skills, and opportunities, bridging the past with the future and ensuring that our community thrives in a rapidly changing world.

However, as we embrace the modern world, we must never lose sight of the immense value of our ancestral knowledge. Skills such as boating, fishing, and shellfishing are not mere activities; they are an embodiment of our connection to the land and sea, encapsulating centuries of experience, adaptation, and survival. Recognizing and valuing these hands-on skills is essential. By doing so, we not only honor the legacy of our elders but also ensure that these traditions are celebrated, practiced, and adapted for future challenges. I will strive to create platforms and programs that give equal importance to these traditional skills alongside contemporary education

is crucial for a holistic educational environment that cherishes the entirety of the Strong People's heritage.

Continuing to support established programs – At the core of a thriving and resilient community are its foundational support systems, and for this community, our established tribal programs play an indispensable role. I will continue to support our health and wellness programs because a healthy community is an empowered community. By ensuring that everyone has access to quality wellness, we lay the foundation for a brighter future. Alongside health and wellness, housing plays a pivotal role in providing stability. I believe that affordable housing is not just about buildings; it's about building an environment where every family can thrive, dream, and grow.

The Tribe's commitment to the community's well-being extends to both our youngest and eldest members. Early childhood education is more than just a steppingstone; it is the foundation upon which a lifetime of learning and personal growth is built. Investing in the early years ensures that our children are equipped with the skills, values, and knowledge to navigate the world with confidence and purpose. Meanwhile, our elders, the pillars of wisdom and tradition in our community, and I will advocate for programs that recognize their invaluable contributions and address their unique needs. By ensuring that they are supported, respected, and engaged, we not only uphold our cultural values but also reinforce the intergenerational bonds that have always been the strength of our Tribe.

Final Thoughts – I see great potential in how this position can provide the chance to lead and guide the Tribe towards its goals, aspirations and advocacy for our interests, but what is most important to me is having the ability to voice tribal member concerns. Learning from past leadership has been crucial for my personal and professional growth. In particular, the leadership of my Uncle Jeromy Sullivan, Jake Jones, and Ron Charles are exceptional standards to study and learn from. Their experiences, skills, and approaches have provided invaluable guidance and inspiration. Even though writing this letter breaks my heart, I know that by examining their leadership styles, decision-making processes, and accomplishments, I can better understand effective leadership and apply those lessons to my endeavors.

I humbly request your consideration for the Council Chairperson.

háʔnəŋ cn, nəščáyəʔčaʔ. yəhúmæct. *Thank you, my friends and family. Take care of yourself.*

Most truly,



Julianna Sullivan