



**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

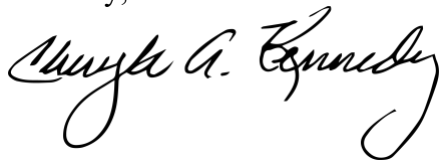
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RADM Weahkee on various issues through the tribal consultation process and other meetings.

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, flowing style.

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