

## Communication Protocol

Between the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Tribal Governments with interests in Washington State.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of these protocols is to assist WSDOT staff when communicating with Tribal Governments and bring consistency to WSDOT's consultation process. This Communication Protocol applies to all formal correspondence with Tribal Chairs. WSDOT and Tribes recognize that day-to-day contact occurs at the staff level.

WSDOT will send the following types of formal correspondence to Tribal Chairs with a cover letter:

- Consultation meeting requests
- Calls for projects / proposals for WSDOT funding programs or planning documents
- When seeking formal input on a project, policy, plan or program
- Submission of Tribal agreements, contracts and contract amendments
- Monitoring / site visit requests for Tribal contract compliance
- Invitations to participate in WSDOT-sponsored public events

Formal correspondence will be addressed in the following manner:

- Address line: The Honorable
- Salutation: Dear Chairman, Chairwoman, or President

When sending formal correspondence to Tribal Chairs, electronic copies should go to the following:

- The appropriate Tribal staff as identified by the Tribe
- For letters regarding statewide / policy issues going to all Tribes, also copy the Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (WITPAC) Delegates, Alternates and designated staff members
- Respective WSDOT staff according to internal protocol

Time sensitive information, such as funding opportunities, may be sent electronically to Tribal Chairs and appropriate staff by WSDOT Tribal Liaisons, Regional Administrators or Division Directors.

The WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison will maintain a current distribution list of transportation contacts including: Tribal Chairs, WITPAC Delegates and staff contacts for Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Planning, TERO and others as identified by each Tribe. The WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison will work with individual Tribes at least once a year to identify and update contacts.

**Implementation and Issue Resolution:**

WSDOT will incorporate these protocols into its agency Executive Order on Tribal Consultation and conduct training to ensure that they are understood by WSDOT management and staff.

If a Tribe(s) becomes concerned that these protocols were not implemented, they are encouraged to contact the WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison. The Tribal Liaison will facilitate a meeting of Tribal representatives and the WSDOT representative responsible for a specific consultation effort. If concerns are not fully resolved, the Tribal Chair may request a consultation meeting with the Secretary of Transportation.