

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING EVERY ) NOVEMBER AS NATIVE AMERICAN ) HERITAGE MONTH IN THE GREATER ) PORTLAND AREA	RESOLUTION NO. 24-5441  Introduced by Chief Operating Officer Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with Council President Lynn Peterson
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WHEREAS, the area now known as greater Portland is built upon the ancestral homelands, villages and traditional use areas of Tribes, bands and Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, Native American Heritage Month provides an opportunity to recognize the diverse cultures, achievements and contributions of Tribes and urban Indigenous communities in the region and society, while not forgetting Oregon’s and the United States’ past transgressions, injustices, acts of violence, thefts of lands and genocidal policies which we vow to never repeat; and

WHEREAS, this month also brings an opportunity to educate the public about how the government’s attempted erasure and genocide of Tribes and Indigenous Peoples can still be felt today through oppressive policies and practices woven throughout governmental systems; and

WHEREAS, Tribes and Indigenous People carry cultural wisdom, traditional knowledge, and professional expertise into every part of our communities, distinguishing themselves as artists, scientists, history makers, storytellers, entrepreneurs and leaders; and

WHEREAS, Tribes and Indigenous Peoples have and continue to provide leadership in our region and across the country to protect critical natural resources including First Foods, the environment, and sensitive cultural and historic resources which tell the story of our shared heritage, for the benefit of all citizens across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Metro continues its commitment to supporting tribal sovereignty through the agency’s Tribal Affairs Program which seeks to establish mutually beneficial relationships with interested Tribes to inform and implement Metro’s work within the context of honoring and respecting tribal treaty rights, tribal trust responsibilities, and ensuring the protection and stewardship of sensitive cultural, historic and natural resources across our region; and

WHEREAS, the Indigenous Community Liaison Program in Parks and Nature is another critical part of our work supporting Native community in access to land, stewardship of the land, and enhancing opportunities for the pursuit of traditional lifeways by the region’s rich and diverse community representing over 380 distinct Tribes in greater Portland; and

WHEREAS, Metro supports the agency’s Indigenous staff affinity group who lead staff advocacy to create cultural awareness opportunities which equip Metro staff and leadership with necessary knowledge and skills to build relationships with Tribes, Indigenous community serving organizations and Indigenous community members, and affirms Metro’s commitment to supporting Indigenous staff who work at Metro including at least 1% of Metro’s workforce who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native; and

WHEREAS, Metro has a responsibility to implement regional policies, strategic planning and projects in a manner that interrupts the systemic erasure of Tribes and Indigenous Peoples;

WHEREAS, Metro has a responsibility to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment, into the agency's regional research, policy, and decision making; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, Metro shall recognize every November as Native American Heritage Month to honor the legacy and ongoing contributions of Tribes and urban Indigenous community members throughout our vibrant community and region, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Metro encourages other businesses, organizations, public institutions, and community members to recognize National Native American Heritage Month and celebrate the Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples who deeply enrich the quality and character of the community making Portland and Oregon a better place to live and work.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this seventh day of November, 2024.



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Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:



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Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 24-5441 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROCLAIMING EVERY NOVEMBER AS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN THE GREATER PORTLAND AREA

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Date: October 23, 2024  
Department: COO/GAPD  
Meeting Date: November 7, 2024

Prepared by: Katie McDonald  
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Length: 40 minutes

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**ISSUE STATEMENT**

This is an opportunity for the Metro Council to honor and celebrate the rich and diverse tribal cultures, traditions and histories as well as acknowledge the important contributions of Tribes and Native people in this region and beyond by adopting Resolution No. 24-5441 recognizing every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Consideration and vote on Resolution No. 24-5441

**IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Advancing the proclamation to observe every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area will uphold the Metro Council's commitment to honor and celebrate the many significant contributions and histories of Tribes and Native people throughout our vibrant region. By recognizing Native American Heritage Month every November, Metro can continue to deepen the understanding of the history and cultural significance of the Tribes and Native people of this land.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends the Metro Council adopt Resolution No. 24-5441

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

- Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro's efforts to build relationships, promote effective communication and coordination, seek opportunities for partnership with sovereign Tribal partners, and implement its programs and activities within the context of honoring and respecting Tribal rights, cultural,

heritage and traditional life ways.

- Council adoption of this resolution will further Metro’s commitment to advancing racial equity, in particular:
  - Metro meaningfully engages communities of color
  - Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce
  - Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations
- Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback
  - None
- Legal Antecedents
  - Metro Council Resolution No. 15-4663; Metro Council Resolution No. 16-4748; Metro Council Resolution No. 17-4851; Metro Resolution No. 18-4936; Metro Resolution 19-4992; Resolution No. 19-5036; Resolution No. 20-5135; Annual US Presidential proclamations since 1992; Multnomah County Resolution No. 2024-088.
- Anticipated Effects
  - Metro shall recognize every November from now on as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area.
- Financial
  - None

## **BACKGROUND**

Metro recognizes the greater Portland area is built upon the ancestral homelands, villages and traditional use areas of the Tribes, bands and Indigenous People of this region who have been caretakers of these lands we cherish since time immemorial.

Native American Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the rich and diverse Tribal cultures, traditions, and histories as well as to acknowledge the important contributions of Tribes and Native people. This is a time to educate the general public about Tribes, to raise a general awareness about the unique challenges Native people have faced both historically and, in the present, and the ways in which they have worked to conquer these challenges.

It is important for us to never forget Oregon’s and the United States’ history of violence, forced migration, thefts of lands and resources, broken treaties, termination, relocation and other assimilative policies. Through these harmful government policies and practices, many Tribes and Native people were forcibly removed from their homelands in our region, across Oregon and the country. Today, as a result, Portland has one of the country’s largest urban Native populations.

Native American Heritage Month originated from an effort in the 1900s to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions Tribes and Native communities made to not only establish but grow the United States. Such efforts were made by courageous Indigenous People, including, but not limited to, Dr. Arthur C. Parker, Sherman Coolidge, and Red Fox James. In 1990 President George H.W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as “National Native American Heritage Month.” Since 1995, Presidents have issued annual proclamations which designate November as National Native American Heritage Month.

Over recent years, Metro has strategically created staff positions such as the Parks and Nature Indigenous Community Liaison and Tribal Affairs Liaison to work collaboratively to develop and implement policies and practices that create trust, partnership and enhance access and opportunity with sovereign tribal governments and Indigenous community members. Additionally, Indigenous staff members at Metro have been supported to gather as a resource group to bring enriched educational awareness to Metro staff and the public. These efforts reflect and affirm Metro’s commitment to building a community that fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diversity of culture and history of the Tribes and Native people in our region and our commitment to work with Tribal nations to protect their rights, interests and resources in the greater Portland metropolitan area.

The last time a similar resolution was in front of the Metro Council was in November 2020. Declaring every November as Native American Heritage Month in the greater Portland area will honor and acknowledge the histories, cultures and resiliency of Tribes and Native people in this region and beyond. Metro shall continue its efforts to partner with Tribal nations and the greater Portland Native American community to promote prosperity and well-being through implementing our programs and activities within the context of honoring and respecting tribal rights, cultural heritage and the pursuit of traditional life ways for present and future generations.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution No. 24-5441