

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Washington State commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Boldt Decision, which affirmed the right of Native American Tribes in Washington State to half the catch in their ancestral fishing grounds and made the Tribes co-managers of Washington fisheries along with the state; and

WHEREAS, Billy Frank, Jr. was instrumental in leading the peaceful protest known as the “Fish Wars” of the 1960’s and 1970’s, where tribal members would exercise their treaty rights despite facing jail time, physical assault and seizure of property in order to protect their way of life; and

WHEREAS, these years-long peaceful demonstrations by Billy Frank, Jr. and other Native American activists resulted in the United States suing Washington State for not upholding the treaty rights of native peoples here and led ultimately to the Boldt Decision; and

WHEREAS, the Boldt Decision is considered by experts as one of the most comprehensive and complex legal fights in the history of Native American law, not only forcing the United States to keep promises in signed treaties but also affirming in U. S. law that tribes are sovereign nations; and

WHEREAS, following the Boldt decision the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission was formed and, under Billy Frank, Jr.’s leadership, established working relationships with state agencies and other non-Indian groups to manage fisheries, restore and protect habitat, and protect Indian treaty rights; and

WHEREAS, in the example of Billy Frank, Jr., native people of the Puget Sound, Columbia River and Salish Sea continue to exhibit remarkable leadership, tireless efforts and dedication to defend and protect their Treaty fishing rights; and in doing so have protected the salmon species and the local ecosystem for future generations; and

WHEREAS, in 2025 a statue of Billy Frank, Jr. will represent Washington State in the United States Capitol Building and will be the first statue depicting a contemporary Native American in the National Statuary Hall; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Olympia City Council, recognizes that all Washingtonians owe a debt of gratitude to local heroes like Billy Frank, Jr. and all those that fought in the Fish Wars and does hereby proclaim March 9, 2024 as

BILLY FRANK JR. DAY

in the City of Olympia and urges all community members to honor his efforts to not only protect a cultural way of life, but the entire Puget Sound ecosystem.

SIGNED IN THE CITY OF OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON THIS 5TH DAY OF MARCH 2024.

OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL

Dontae Payne

Mayor