Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today issued the following statement on the passing of Billy Frank Jr., a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe and chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission in Washington State:

“Billy Frank Jr. was an undaunted defender of and respected elder statesman for tribal treaty fishing rights. For over 30 years he helped lead the fight to preserve and protect the salmon and its habitat in Western Washington, thereby ensuring it remains a vital part of Northwest tribal culture and the Pacific Northwest’s economy.

“His wisdom on the importance of conservation and the protection of natural resources has been recognized by all who love the great outdoors. Thanks to his leadership and years of hard work, we can continue to appreciate the great gifts of nature that are still with us and the tribes of the Pacific Northwest can still rely on the salmon to sustain them for generations to come.

“Thank you, Billy, for your tireless work for Indian Country and our nation.

“On behalf of my office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education, we extend our condolences to the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and to Mr. Frank’s family, friends and colleagues.”