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Mr. Robert Tomanswash, Elder  
Wanapum  
PO Box 275  
Beverly, WA 99321

October 29, 1997

Donald R. Curtis, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel,  
Corps of Engineers, District Engineer  
Department of the Army  
Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District  
201 North Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

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Lieutenant Colonel Curtis:

The Wanapums have been involved with the Corp of Engineers, the Tribes, interested public since the discovery of "The Ancient One", the Elder.

We are disturbed that anyone is in favor of studying and testing the site of our elder. We have teachings from yesterday that we believe in today and passing to tomorrow. This is our way of life, cultural and traditional, which is passed from generation-to-generation. We have a connection to everything around us, above us, and below us including within us. Down from the largest to the smallest particle, physical and non is important - and life! We have laws that we must follow which are passed down through our teacher "our elders" and the most important of these is "The Unwritten Law." This is instilled from the time we have a heart and begin life until the day we expire, and are returned to the earth. We are asking you to deny these permits for continued study and testing.

The "Ancient One," the Elder, where he was found is the home of our Indian People. Since time immemorial, our ancestors, the Wanapums, lived along these banks of the river, some of our elders have lived the stretch of the Columbia River. Our people have been born here, raised here, taught here, lived from the foods and medicines of the land, and the water, died here, and put back to the earth. This earth takes us back so that we can continue to strengthen and nourish the foods and medicines and bring new life in.

It hurts our Wanapum Elders hearts and our hearts that we must continue to talk of the human remains and the earth, time and time again. This is against "The Unwritten Law". For once they have been returned to the earth, we are to leave them alone until the time is promised for the judgment day. We are disturbing the remains and the earth, the soil, by keeping them above their resting place chosen for them. We do understand that certain things need to be defined, described, aged, or what have you; BUT, our belief to

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the environment around us, from the largest to the smallest is very, very important to us. We, the Indian People, the Wanapums believe we are keepers of the land, our songs, our traditional and cultural ways, our beliefs, our hearts are one with the land and we believe this is the Unwritten Law which guides us today as our ancestors were in the past. We will not change our morals, ethics, and spirituality of our elders responsibilities.

We, the Wanapums, are asking you not to take a decision to study the site of our elder. By allowing the study to go on only makes it hard for us that these remains are being abused by everyone until they are laid back to the earth, the soil from where they came. We, also, ask you to deny these applications for future study and any future permit for applications to study and test the ancient ancestral place.

Sincerely,  
Wanapum

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Tomanawash".

Mr. Robert Tomanawash  
Wanapum Elder

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