



September 9, 2014

Douglas O. Cole, Superintendent  
Cedar Creek Corrections Center  
State of Washington Department of Corrections  
P.O. Box 37  
Littlerock, WA 98556

Superintendent Cole:

Thank you for your letter regarding statewide burn bans and ceremonial sweat lodges within facilities at the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). Your respect for the burn ban is appreciated. The purpose of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' ban on outdoor burning is to protect human lives and property, forest lands, wildlife habitat, and air quality during seasons of high fire danger.

I recognize that there is a significant difference between a recreational fire and a ceremonial fire. Ceremonial fires may be conducted in burn pits within the confines of a Department of Corrections facility. If a ceremonial fire is to occur outside of a DOC facility and on forested lands under the protection of DNR, we would appreciate your cooperation with any DNR-issued burn ban.

Should you have additional questions about outdoor burning restrictions or would like further clarification about locations that may fall under DNR jurisdiction, please contact Mary Verner, Deputy Supervisor for Resource Protection & Administration, at [mary.verner@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:mary.verner@dnr.wa.gov) or 360-902-1684.

Sincerely,

Peter Goldmark  
Commissioner of Public Lands

c: Bernard Warner, Secretary, Washington State Department of Corrections  
Earl Wright, Deputy Director, Prisons Division, DOC  
Mary Verner, Deputy Supervisor for Resource Protection & Administration, DNR  
Joenne McGerr, Tribal Liaison, DNR  
Eric Wisch, Pacific Cascade Region Manager, DNR  
Albert Kassel, Resource Protection Division Manager  
Mark Hayes, Camps Program Manager, DNR  
14-160



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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
OF PUBLIC LANDS



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
CEDAR CREEK CORRECTIONS CENTER  
PO BOX 37 • Littlerock, Washington 98556 • (360) 359-4100  
FAX (360) 586-5826

August 11, 2014

Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands  
PO Box 47000  
1111 Washington Street SE  
Olympia, WA 98504-7000

Mr. Goldmark,

I am writing to request exemption from the statewide burn bans for ceremonial sweat lodges within the Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. In the past, some ceremonial sweat lodges have been halted due to the statewide burn ban. This creates significant impacts for Native Americans whose religious practice has been put on hold.

According to the DNR website, the burn ban is in place until September 30, 2014 unless it is a recreational fire in approved fire pits on DNR protected lands. The size of the burn pile for sweat lodges is approximately 3-4 feet maximum. Fire protection to include: water, a fire tenderer is present for the duration of the ceremony, and at the end of the ceremony the fires are fully extinguished.

Corrections Camps Interagency Coordinating Committee (CCICC) has meet with Mark Hayes and Albert Kassel regarding the above issue. It was stated during our latest meeting, that burn bans should not affect the Native American Sweat Lodge religious practice due to the burn pit location being on or inside the controlled perimeter of each facility.

I am requesting authorization for ceremonial fires used for Native American sweat lodges to be exempt from the burn ban. I thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas O. Cole".

Douglas O. Cole, Superintendent  
Cedar Creek Corrections Center

DOC:amg:DOC 14-058