



Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Tribal Council

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Paula Hart, Director
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Re: Support of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians for Coquille Indian Tribe proposal for Off-Reservation Gaming Operation in Medford, Oregon

Dear Assistant Secretary Newland and OIG Director Hart:

My name is Delores Pigsley, Tribal Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (“Siletz Tribe”). It has always been the policy of the Siletz Tribe to support the economic development efforts of other federally-recognized Indian tribes that they can show they are entitled to. Today I am writing on behalf of the Siletz Tribe to support the Coquille Indian Tribe’s efforts to establish a Class II gaming operation in Medford, Oregon, on tribal land they are seeking to place into trust status for gaming purposes under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

The Siletz Tribe has a strong legal and historical connection to the Medford area where the Coquille Tribe proposes to locate its Class II gaming operation. The geographic area where the Coquille Tribe proposes to locate its off-reservation gaming operation in Medford is within the lands ceded by the Siletz Tribe under three ratified treaties. The Siletz Tribe therefore has a critical interest in actions by other tribes that take place within the Siletz Tribe’s historical area, and where the Tribe has continuing and ongoing legal and political interests.

Like the Siletz Tribe, the Coquille Tribe shares a history of being terminated in the 1950s by Congress and restoration decades later. The Siletz Tribe and its constituent bands and tribes as well as the Coquille Tribe were terminated by the Western Oregon Indians Termination Act in 1954. This Congressional Act was a disaster for all the affected tribes and bands, scattering the tribes across western Oregon, disposing of all remaining tribal lands, and ending federal services and benefits provided to tribes and their members by virtue of their political status as federally-recognized Indian tribes. All terminated tribes struggled to maintain their governmental existence and continuing to provide services to tribal members while ceaselessly advocating to overturn termination. The Siletz Tribe was not restored by

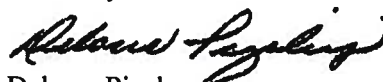
Congress until 1977, the second tribe in the country to achieve this status, while the Coquille Tribe was not restored until 1988. Termination had long-running devastating impacts on tribal cohesion and culture that the affected tribes are still struggling to overcome decades later. Large unmet tribal needs remain. Authorizing the Coquille Tribe to operate a Class II gaming facility in Medford, Oregon, will assist that tribe in overcoming and addressing long-standing discrimination and the continuing adverse effects of termination. Both Siletz and Coquille have much ground to make up from termination's impacts before they can reassume to the same sovereign status and funding enjoyed by other federally-recognized tribes that never had to go through termination.

The Siletz Tribe supports the Coquille Indian Tribe's proposal to operate a Class II gaming operation in Medford and putting land owned by the Tribe in Medford into trust for that purpose. The Siletz Tribe supports the Coquille Tribe's fee-to-trust application for gaming purposes, and also supports the Department's determination that the property in question will be eligible for gaming under the restored lands exception of Section 20 of the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The Siletz Tribe understands that an internal Solicitor's Opinion has reached the opinion that the Coquille Tribe's Medford property would qualify for the Section 20 Restoration exception if the land goes into trust, and Siletz supports the conclusion of that opinion.

The Siletz Tribe offers no opinion or position on the Department's environmental review of the involved property. Siletz would note, however, in contrast to the position taken by some other Oregon Indian tribes, that there is no "one casino per tribe" policy in Oregon as either a formal state policy or as a restriction either under IGRA or under the Oregon Tribes' IGRA gaming compacts with the State. The recent Oregon Legislative Joint Commission on Gaming Policy reached this exact same conclusion in its Interim Final Report on gaming within Oregon. Most IGRA compacts in Oregon, including the Siletz Tribe's, specifically authorize the Tribe to negotiate for additional gaming opportunities a set period of time, which has long expired.

In conclusion, the Siletz Tribe supports the Coquille Tribe's proposal to establish a Class II gaming operation under IGRA in Medford, Oregon. Please let me know if you have any questions or require clarification or information.

Sincerely,



Delores Pigsley
Tribal Chairman

Cc: Siletz Tribal Council
Siletz Tribal Attorney
Brenda Meade, Coquille Chairman