



Diane M. Linn, Multnomah County Chair

March 14, 2006

The Honorable Richard Pombo
Chairman, United States House Committee on Resources
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Sent Via Fax: 202.226.0861 & 209.951.1910

The Honorable Greg Walden
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Sent Via Fax: 202.225.5774 & 541.779.0204

RE: H.R. 4893 and the off-reservation casino proposal in the Columbia Gorge

Dear Chair Pombo and Congressman Walden,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks, Oregon within the heart of one of our nation's most scenic treasures, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and just ten miles from Multnomah County.

The Columbia River Gorge is a unique natural treasure. It is protected by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act passed by the Congress twenty years ago, in 1986. This Act was the culmination of a variety of efforts over the past eighty (80) years and the Act generated support from both political parties. The designation of the Gorge as a special place is both the law and the practice here in Oregon. Our citizens are proud of the Gorge and its cliffs, waterfalls and the variety of ecosystems which can be enjoyed by our citizens today and by future generations.

For the reasons stated above, I support reform of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) by requiring greater community consultation and approval and support restrictions on what is commonly referred to as "off-reservation gaming." In addition, I support amending the IGRA so Indian gaming casinos are prohibited within our national parks and national scenic areas to ensure there are no loopholes allowing current applications to be exempt from the legislation.



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The residents of Multnomah County are the primary target market of the Cascade Locks casino proposal. The County's boundary lies within 10 miles of the proposed site for the casino, but we have not seen a request for consultation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Perhaps this is because our major metropolitan center lies just outside a ten mile radius. It is my hope that consultation will take place prior to any further progress on the proposed casino.

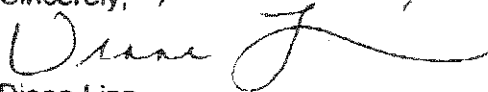
I support the Warm Spring's efforts to create a reliable, sustainable revenue source for their tribal members, but I am disappointed that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has chosen not to require consideration of an on-reservation alternative, prior to moving forward on the development of the casino within the gorge.

If the Warm Springs Tribe were to locate a new **on-reservation** casino along U.S. Highway 26, that casino would generate much more revenue than their current casino already provides. It would also sustain many more jobs for tribal members closer to their homes. It would maintain Oregon's policy barring off-reservation casinos and would protect both Multnomah County and the Columbia River Gorge.

I urge you to consider amending the IGRA to prohibit casinos within our national parks, wilderness areas, national scenic areas and national recreation areas which would eliminate the inherent environmental conflicts between casino gaming facilities and the preservation of natural, scenic and natural resource-based recreational values. Your legislation is designed to protect the people of the United States from the negative environmental impacts of off-reservation casino development and the people of Multnomah County deserve the same protections.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on this matter and for your interest and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Diane Linn
Multnomah County Chair

Cc: House Resources Committee
George Skibine, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior
James Cason, Associate Deputy Secretary of Interior