



March 10, 2006

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Sent Via Fax: 202.228.2862 & 602.952.8702

The Honorable Gordon Smith
404 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Sent Via Fax: 202.228.3997 & 503.326.2900

Dear Senators McCain and Smith:

We are writing to express our opposition to the proposed off-reservation casino in the Columbia River Gorge community of Cascade Locks, 30 miles east of Portland in Oregon. We urge you and your committee to approve IGRA reform legislation that bans off-reservations casinos, includes no loopholes allowing special treatment to approve the Gorge casino and treats all of Oregon's Native American tribes equally.

While the legislation currently before your committee does ban off-reservation casinos, the ambiguity of the language could create a loophole allowing the Columbia River Gorge Casino to go forward, despite 63% of Oregonians opposing it. Any loophole of this kind would be both unfair to Oregon's Indian tribes and against the wishes of most Oregonians, .

All Oregon Indian tribes should be treated equally. A legislative loophole allowing one tribe an off-reservation casino, while requiring others to stay on reservation land, is not fair. State and Federal policies should not treat tribes differently. In addition to being unfair, it will ultimately lead to casinos far beyond what was envisioned when IGRA was enacted.

While we fully support and respect the desire of all Native American tribes to seek economic opportunities to improve the lives of their members, we do not believe it is wise to open the door to off-reservation casinos across Oregon when ample opportunities for successful on-reservation casinos currently exist. Public opinion polls show that Oregonians do support on-reservation gambling and are fearful that opening the door for the first off-reservation casino will lead to many more.

As you heard in the testimony from Friends of the Columbia Gorge and The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde on February 28th, allowing an off-reservation casino in the Columbia River Gorge sets a dangerous precedent. We urge you to oppose the Gorge casino request, to maintain policies that allow casinos only on reservation lands and to support federal legislation without a Gorge casino loophole that treats all tribes equally.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mike McCallum
President/CEO
Oregon Restaurant Association



Gregg Mindt
President/CEO
Oregon Lodging Association



Bill Perry
Director of Government Affairs
Oregon Restaurant Association

CC:
Members, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Members, House Resources Committee