



March 10, 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

Dear Congressmen Pombo and Walden:

I served on the Governor's Gaming Task Force here in Oregon in 1995. From the standpoint of residual affects related to the fast-paced growth of gambling in Oregon we are very concerned about the possibility of an off-reservation casino in the Columbia Gorge.

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 and to urge you and your committee to approve IGRA reform legislation that a) bans off-reservations casinos, b) includes no loopholes allowing special treatment to approve the Gorge casino, c) treats all of Oregon's Native American tribes equally and reflects the expressed, good judgment of our citizens.

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 and create an inconsistent policy towards other Oregon Indian tribes.

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, any legal challenge to this loophole would ultimately lead to casinos far beyond what was envisioned when IGRA was enacted.



While we 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 appropriate to open the door to off-reservation casinos across Oregon in order to meet those needs. Public opinion polls show that Oregonians are fearful that opening the door for the first off-reservation casino, will lead to many more.

The concern of our citizens is also well placed. As with any industry there are reasonable considerations for regulations that protect the best interests of the population. There will surely be a growth in off-reservation casinos if such a policy is applied consistently. I would further suggest that legal challenges to the limitation of the loophole would make this application mandatory. The result would be an accelerated rate of gambling opportunities in Oregon against the will and concern of its citizens.

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 echo those same concerns and urge you to oppose the Gorge casino request. We urge you to support federal legislation without a Gorge casino loophole that treats all tribes equally.

Thank you for your consideration, and your public service on our behalf.

Sincerely,



Michael Howden
Executive Director

CC:

Members, House Resources Committee



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

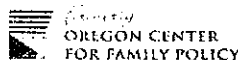
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Michael Howden
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