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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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AND THE INTERNET

April 13, 2023

The Honorable Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Coquille Application Should be Subject to IGRA's Two-Part Determination

Dear Assistant Secretary Newland:

I write to oppose the Coquille Indian Tribe's application to take land into trust for gaming purposes in Medford, Oregon, under the restored lands exception to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). While I absolutely support economic development for all of Oregon's federally recognized Indian Tribes, it must be pursued through the appropriate channels. The appropriate channel for this application is a two-part determination, through which local governments and the community in Southern Oregon will have a voice in the decision-making process.

I have heard, in discussions with local community members, tribes with existing in-area gaming facilities, established Medford businesses, and local politicians, that there is significant opposition to a casino in Medford. It is my opinion, based on these conversations, that an activity of such major significance and impact should be discussed and decided using the two-part determination that provides local communities with a meaningful voice in the process.

I applaud the Coquille Indian Tribe for its economic development efforts and its great success with its existing Class III gaming facility, and its construction enterprise, Tribal One. However, further economic development for the Coquille should not come at the cost of safety, opportunity, or economic development for Medford and its surrounding communities.

In order to effectuate the clear intention of Congress in passing both the IGRA and the Coquille Restoration Act, your office should direct the Coquille Indian Tribe to pursue the two-part process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cliff Bentz".

Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress