



# The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Of Michigan

7070 EAST BROADWAY

MT. PLEASANT, MICHIGAN 48858

(989) 775-4005

FAX (989) 775-4131

**Tribal Chief**

August 06, 2015

Honorable Kevin Washburn  
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Washburn:

I write to you on behalf of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan with regard to the Coquille Indian Tribe application to take lands near Medford, Oregon, into trust for gaming purposes as restored lands. We understand these lands are located far outside the aboriginal lands of the Coquille Tribe and are within the aboriginal lands of another Tribe. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan opposes these type of trust applications and we urge you to interpret the Coquille Restoration Act in a manner that precludes the Coquille Tribe from acquiring lands outside their aboriginal the land in Medford as restored lands.

We believe that interpreting the Coquille Restoration Act to allow this acquisition to be deemed restored lands would create a precedent that would cause other similarly situated tribes, including some in Michigan, to pursue off-reservation gaming projects outside of their historical territories, and in the aboriginal territory of other tribes.

It is our understanding that in the Coquille Restoration Act, Congress designated a specific area in which the Coquille could secure land in trust as mandatory matter, and separately authorized the Secretary to acquire additional land in trust as a discretionary matter in the tribe's "service area," pursuant to his authority under the Indian Reorganization Act. It is also our understanding that the facility proposed by Coquille is more than 160 miles from the tribe's existing lands.

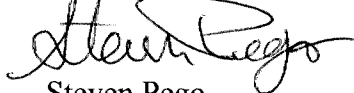
The Saginaw Chippewa believes the Coquille Restoration Act, and other similar restoration acts, should be interpreted narrowly, such that the acquisition of those lands fall under the purview of the Secretary's authority to take land into trust under the IRA. There are other tribes in the state of Michigan who have acts of restoration similar to the Coquille Restoration Act, and if that restoration act is read broadly, these tribes would

look to pursue the same course of action as Coquille; they would seek to go far outside their aboriginal lands to locations that are in another tribes aboriginal territory.

This would unsettle the current compact framework within the state of Michigan, and could cause unnecessary strife between the tribes in the state.

Accordingly, we recommend that you interpret the Coquille Restoration Act in a manner that is consistent with the legislative intent and respects other tribes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Pego". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Steven Pego

Chief

Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan