

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 2013

Kevin K. Washburn  
Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary Washburn,

We are writing in regard to the Coquille Indian Tribe's application for land to be taken into trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the purposes of Class II gaming in Jackson County, Oregon. While we applaud the Coquille Indian Tribe in their efforts to build their economy and become ever more self-sufficient, and while we naturally respect the tribe's sovereignty and support the ideals of tribal self-determination, this application has far reaching effects for the State of Oregon.

In Oregon, we have a long history of striking a balance between the pursuit of gaming revenues, which benefits tribal members enormously, and the risks associated with a significant increase in the number of gaming facilities which would have negative consequences in many of our communities.

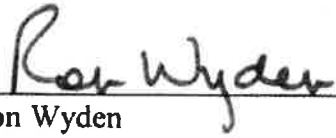
Before voters authorized a state-run lottery in 1984, the only gambling legally permitted in the state was in the form of well-controlled *pari-mutuel* (race track) gambling and occasional locally-permitted charity events. Oregon's Governor, John Kitzhaber, who has negotiated many of the current tribal compacts with federally-recognized tribes in order to support tribal self-sufficiency, has long adhered to the policy of "one casino per tribe." The precedent of a second significant gaming facility for any one tribe, whether it is a Class II or Class III, is a clear expansion of that policy and would have serious implications for further expansions to be made by other tribes. Oregon's careful balance between producing gambling revenues and a focus on the public good of our citizens could be seriously compromised.

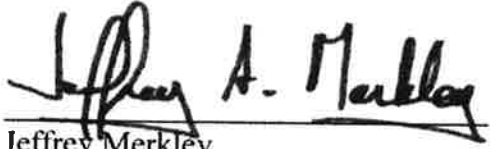
In addition, the situation is greatly complicated by the evolving technology of gaming. In the past, a Class II gaming facility was essentially a bingo hall. Now, however, modern computer technology enables Class II facilities to include machines that do not have much distinction from those in Class III facilities. We are concerned that what the Coquille tribe is proposing would in reality turn out to be more akin to what is contemplated when establishing a Class III facility in Oregon, rather than a Class II facility.

Noting that you have already received communications regarding this issue from the Governor of Oregon, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the City of Medford, we join them in

opposing this application. If you have questions regarding this issue, please contact Cisco Minthorn at 202-224-4971 in Senator Wyden's office and Elizabeth Cooney at 202-224-7967 in Senator Merkley's office.

Sincerely,

  
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Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeffrey Merkley  
U.S. senator

cc: Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior  
Stanley M. Speaks, Bureau of Indian Affairs Northwest Regional Director