

LETTER 25 (LOG # 267)

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11-21

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Mr. Stanley Speaks
Bureau of Indian Affairs
US Department of Interior
911 NE 11th Ave
Portland, Or 97232
Hand delivered this date.

Re: Cowlitz Casino DEIS

The DEIS falsely asserts the Cowlitz are "landless." In fact the Tribe owns several parcels of land in Cowlitz County, including their headquarters building in Longview and their Housing Authority building near Toledo.

267-1

If the intent was to say the Tribe has no reservation, this too is incorrect. Both the Chehalis and Quinault Reservations were established for the Cowlitz Tribe. Though Cowlitz leaders initially did not approve of the Quinault reservation, Cowlitz Indians, including Chairman Barnett, later obtained allotments there comprising thousands of acres of valuable timberland. Cowlitz Indians apparently did approve of the Chehalis Reservation. By 1878¹ over 600 Indians including Cowlitz were living there.¹

Cowlitz Indians voted to confederate with the Quinault tribes in 1934. The Quinault casino is operated in part for Cowlitz Indians.²

It would be accurate to say that the Cowlitz Tribal Chairman does not have a casino. That is because casinos on the two reservations set aside for the Cowlitz Indians are governed by other tribal entities and present no opportunity to enrich the Barnett family. The financial arrangements for the casino under consideration show that the principal beneficiary of this proposal will be the Chairman's son, David Barnett, who stands to make over \$100 million, personally in the first few years.

¹ "The Indians for whom this Reservation was set apart, being parties to no treaty, number at least 600, and consist of remnants of the Chehalis and . . . Cowlitz tribes." Report by Agent Milroy, 1878.

² "The Quinault Indian Nation is comprised of over 1,300 members of the Quinault, Queets, Hoh, Quilleute, Chehalis, Cowlitz, and Chinook tribes. The 201,150-acre reservation is pure in its wild coastline, unspoiled lakes, raging rivers, and pristine wilderness. It is also home to one of the largest conifer-producing forest in America." <http://www.quinaultbeachresort.com/quinault-nation.html>

The DEIS fails to identify and consider a fundamental difference between a casino sited under the "two part" determination of IGRA and one that is sited under an exemption from the two part test. The Cowlitz are requesting an exemption.

267-2

If the DOI uses the two part test, then harms to surrounding communities must be mitigated and the state governor must concur. If the DOI bypasses the two part test under the "restored lands" or "initial reservation" provisions, then harms to the surrounding community do not have to be mitigated.

The Draft ignores the difference and fails to acknowledge that the Cowlitz proposal will not be consensual. Rather it would be imposed by the DOI against community and our state governor's objections. By definition, the Cowlitz proposal is far more damaging to community interests than projects of other tribes approved under the two-part test.

The DEIS also fails to identify and consider the cumulative programmatic effect of introducing Las Vegas style gambling facilities in or near major cities all over the country. Other tribes have sought and many are seeking federal siting of gambling facilities in non-Indian communities. At least three other tribes want to have casinos in or near Portland-Vancouver. This is such an important negative trend that legislation is pending in Congress to curb the practice. The Draft fails to acknowledge and evaluate how the Cowlitz proposal exacerbates the national reservation-shopping crisis.

267-3

Finally, the Draft fails to consider how a decision to site a Cowlitz casino outside the Tribe's adjudicated territory and historical homeland will encourage Indian tribes to falsify their history and to steal the identities of other tribes. One local example is the shameful attempt by the Cowlitz to claim the largest Chinookan village visited by Lewis and Clark, Cathlapotle. There is no historical record associating the Cowlitz Tribe with this village at any time. Another example is the claim by the Tribe to the Chelatchie Prairie. The Chelatchie Prairie is named after the Klickitat village called chalacha, a Sahaptin term for a type of grass.³ The site lies along the Klickitat Trail that connected numerous Klickitat villages from Fort Vancouver to the east Mount Adams area. All the Cowlitz villages were along the Cowlitz River many miles north.

267-4

The EIS should confess that the decision would site a Cowlitz casino away from the Cowlitz aboriginal homeland in an area near ancient Chinookan and Klickitat villages, against the wishes of the local and state governments involved. Such a decision sells true Indian history for gambling money. It would be unfair to other Tribes and

³Norton, Helen H., Robert Boyd, and Eugene S. Hunn 1993. The Klickitat Trail of South-Central Washington: A Reconstruction of Seasonally Used Resource Sites. In Prehistoric Places on the Southern Northwest Coast, Robert E. Greengo, editor, pp. 121-152. Thomas Burke Memorial State Museum, University of Washington, Seattle.

would harm state and local interests in ways that have not been acknowledged in the DEIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

267-4
Cont.