

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM ELLIOTT, CHIEF OF POLICE, CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION OF OREGON

REGARDING SB 731

Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

Oregon Legislative Assembly

March 18, 2021

Good morning Chairman Prozanski and members of the Committee. My name is Bill Elliott, and I am the Chief of Police for the Warm Springs Tribe of Oregon. I have over thirty (30) years of Tribal, State, and Federal law enforcement experience, having been a Klamath County Sheriff's Deputy at the start of my career.

I am pleased to be testifying before you today in support of SB 731, and believe the passage of this bill will only broaden the bridge between State, County, and Tribal police agencies, allowing us to grow already productive relationships that have developed between our agencies since the passage of SB 412.

In the case of the Warm Springs Tribal Police Department, we have four (4) different counties with which we interface, and a major state Hwy (Hwy 26) that bisects the reservation, in addition to Tribal, Federal, or State criminal jurisdiction being applied to various violations due to the status of the land or that of the victims/offenders. Thus we have a need to access all available jurisdictional tools in order to carry out the public safety issues affecting the Warm Springs Community, and in supporting our law enforcement partners in the Central Oregon area.

In taking the oath to become a Warm Springs Tribal Police Officer, you must swear to uphold and support the Constitution of the Warm Springs Tribe, State of Oregon, and the United States. In doing so, one needs the appropriate authority and training, and as for the State of Oregon this came about through the enactment of SB 412.

The Warm Springs Tribal Police Department is a member of the Central Oregon Law Enforcement Committee that is made up of all the Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, and State Enforcement agencies in Central Oregon, and allows management to coordinate interagency support matters. We also have detectives assigned to the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Task Force, and operate under a mutual aide agreement for the Major Crimes Unit for this region.

In addition to Warm Springs, there are six (6) other Tribal Police organizations that operate in this State, interfacing with over ten (10) counties. This includes the Columbia River Enforcement group that operates under four (4) different Tribal Commissions, a Bureau of Indian Affairs Federal Commission, and various county commissions.

So, the task of blending all of the unique enforcement demands placed on the management of these departments, in addition to executing our primary function to provide law enforcement services to the

tribal communities are extreme, and the ability to adjust to take in these various jurisdictional demands is critical.

Thus, there is a need for clarity when trying to balance all of the regulatory demands of three separate sovereigns (Tribal, Federal, State), which has led to operational misunderstandings at times as it relates to the sovereign right of the Tribe to manage its law enforcement program(s).

It is our opinion that SB 731 will serve to eliminate any misunderstandings related to the status of Tribal Police Officers when operating under Tribal, State, or even Federal Commissions, and the operation of Tribal Police Departments when functioning under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Tribe.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our opinion in this matter, and am happy to answer any questions you may have of me.