



COW CREEK BAND OF UMPQUA TRIBE OF INDIANS
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Dear Chair Golden, Vice- Chair Kennemer and members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge the adoption of clarifying language relating to section 50 of Senate Bill 1501, which we have shared with the Governor's office. The minor changes to the section recognize tribal sovereignty and our right to manage our lands, which were taken away from us many years ago with broken promises in return.

Indigenous forest management practices are the reason so many of Oregon's forests are strong and healthy. Our commitment to environmental stewardship to preserve natural resources for seven generations into the future is rooted in our culture and as a sovereign government does not need to be - nor is it appropriate for it to be - legislated by the State of Oregon.

We believe it is important for you, as state leaders, to understand that one Tribe represents one government. There are nine distinct Tribal governments in Oregon with a rich and diverse history in this state. As such, each Tribe can and should have the right to advocate for its people even if it does not reflect the position of all tribes.

So while we support the amendment with clarifications on tribal sovereignty, we also support other Tribal governments offering information regarding this legislation, and believe that information should be considered as part of our government-to-government relationship.

Had Tribes been included in conversations starting in 2020, the clarity we are seeking to recognize tribal governments as sovereign entities and not subject to this private forest agreement could have been resolved earlier and before this already compressed legislative process.

Our hope is that this experience can be leveraged for an opportunity. An opportunity to use this legislation to confirm the state's recognition of tribal sovereignty on fee and other lands. Beyond this legislation, we want to work together for our two governments to identify a more effective way to engage in critical policy conversations earlier, so we can accomplish what is best for all Oregonians, tribal and non-tribal.

We urge you to adopt our recommended additions to section 50 of SB 1501. As the legislation moves forward, we support a process that relies on the best available science to protect our fish, recognizes the importance of forest sector jobs to rural communities and continues to honor tribal sovereignty.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dan Courtney
Dan Courtney

Chairman
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians