

The Klamath Tribes Tribal Council

May 3rd, 2023

Joint Ways and Means Committee
Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner & Co-Chair Representative Tawna Sanchez

Dear Senator Steiner & Representative Sanchez,

Please accept this letter of support for HB 3565 and HB 5025, particularly as they pertain to the Oregon State Tribal Grant Program (OSTGP).

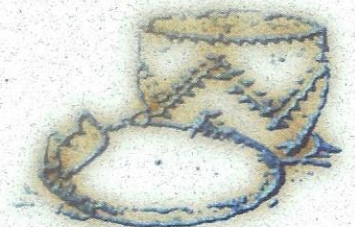
The impact of this grant for Klamath Tribal members has been immediate and dramatic. Specifically, the number of our tribal members enrolled in higher education tripled in a single year! In addition to the nearly 90 currently attending institutions of higher learning, our Education and Employment Department is working with approximately 30 more to complete their applications.

The need to increase the levels of higher education in our tribal community cannot be overstated.

Poverty related problems cultivated through the racialized experiences of many generations of tribal members bring tragedy and despair every day. And we struggle to compete for professionals (who often prefer the amenities and higher salaries available in urban settings) that will allow us to address these problems. We need medical professionals, mental health experts, social workers, and all of the support staff expertise necessary to institutionalize these capacities.

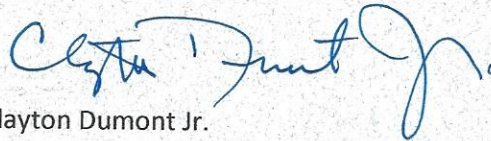
In addition, 25 years of forced termination of our federally recognized status (1961-1986) stripped us of our land base (at the time approximately 800,000 acres) and brought greed-inspired ecological devastation to forests, rivers, and Oregon's largest lake—all of which our people depend on for treaty protected subsistence. Cleaning up that mess requires lawyers, biologists, foresters, water quality experts, fisheries scientists, hydrologists, engineers, and many other professional skills.

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Finally, although we have started and maintained a small casino for a number of years, and more recently stood up a travel center/truck stop and hotel, these are not generating the kind of revenue necessary to support a wide array of tribal needs. We desperately need our people to acquire professional business acumen.

"Growing our own" with the help of Oregon's universities and colleges is the best way for us to ensure a stable, population of tribal professionals dedicated to our people and our homeland. The Oregon State Tribal Grant Program has in only one year begun what I hope will be a continuing and dramatic shift toward meeting this goal. Please support it!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clayton Dumont Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Clayton Dumont Jr.
Chairman