



COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE

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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water RE: SB 777 Support

The Coquille Indian Tribe is a sovereign federally recognized Indian Tribe with lands of historic and modern interests stretching over a vast area now known as Southwest Oregon. The Tribe stewarded these lands and waters from time immemorial, sustaining ourselves with its abundance.

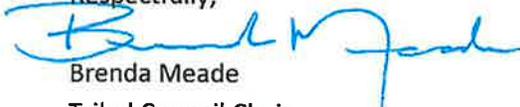
The lands that we manage are not (yet) identified as an "Area of Known Wolf Activity" or a focal area of the specific issues SB 777 addresses. However, there are *important principles* upon which SB 777 rests that prompt me to offer our support. Those include:

Management Plans adopted by ODFW, whether it be the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan or a Fisheries Management Plan must remain true to their principle Goals. Almost universally those Goals are to balance conservation of native fish and wildlife species with the social, economic, interests and needs of users and landowners. When the most impacted communities cry out because the promise of protection and consideration of their interests and needs is going unfulfilled, this must be considered and addressed. SB 777 does this.

Fish and wildlife conservation in Oregon requires the strongest support from the farming, ranching, hunting and angling communities and private property owners. This is true whether the work is on wolves or salmon. Our conservation efforts will fail without it. If the work that we fish and wildlife managers do create "winners and losers" – whether it be between species or between species and local communities, we've failed. SB 777 seeks to restore a balance, reenlist the trust and partnership of local communities and industry most impacted by wolves.

SB 777 should not fail for lack of state funding. The Legislative Assembly, the OFWC and State and Tribal co-managers must stop developing fish and wildlife conservation laws, policies, and plans that don't reasonably address *all financial consequences*. Whether it's wolves, orcas, beaver, sea otters, or "wild salmon" our institutions must be much more skeptical of the ecotopian, single issue constituencies that push us to such untenable positions. They provide little financial support for our conservation. I have heard some actually say that Oregon's Tribes, rural ranchers, farmers, fishermen, hunters, and trappers should abandon their lifeways and livelihoods - or pay up to create a paradise once known to the native peoples of this land, but sadly, not universally attainable in today's Oregon. All Oregonians have to pay the freight for the laws and policies we adopt on their behalf but have disparate impacts. I urge you to find a way.

Respectfully,


Brenda Meade
Tribal Council Chair



From the Office of Bobby Levy

Oregon House of Representatives
House District 58

