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PUBLIC MEETING
COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE FEE-TO-TRUST AND GAMING
FACILITY PROJECT
JANUARY 31, 2023

BALINDA DUNLAP, CSR 10710, RPR, CRR, RMR
489303



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PUBLIC MEETING
COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE FEE-TO-TRUST AND GAMING
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JANUARY 31, 2023

REPORTER: BALINDA DUNLAP, CSR 10710, RPR, CRR, RMR

1 REMOTE VIA ZOOM, JANUARY 31, 2023

2 ---o0o---

3 MR. MOGAVERO: Good evening. The Bureau
4 of Indian Affairs welcomes you to the second public
5 hearing for the draft environmental impact
6 statement, also known as a DEIS, prepared for the
7 Coquille Indian Tribe fee-to-trust and Class II
8 gaming facility project located in the City of
9 Medford, Oregon.

10 My name is Tobiah Mogavero; and I am the
11 Northwest Regional NEPA coordinator for the
12 Environmental and Cultural Resource Management
13 Department of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, also
14 known as DECRM, based out of Portland, Oregon.

15 The Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA for
16 short, is the primary federal agency charged with
17 carrying out the United States trust responsibility
18 to American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples and
19 also maintaining the federal
20 government-to-government relationship with
21 federally-recognized tribes.

22 Other participants at this evening's
23 hearing include DECRM's environmental protection
24 specialist Alexander Sheroki and the regional
25 archeologist Eirik Thorsgard, as well as BIA's EIS

1 consultants, Acorn Environmental.

2 Please note that this hearing will also be
3 presented with closed-captioning for the
4 hearing-impaired. To activate this feature, please
5 click your mouse on the closed-captioning icon at
6 the bottom of your screen.

7 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to
8 facilitate public review and comments on the draft
9 EIS for the proposed fee-to-trust acquisition of a
10 2.4-acre parcel in the City of Medford and the
11 subsequent proposed operation of a Class II gaming
12 facility on the same parcel by the Coquille Indian
13 Tribe.

14 If the BIA approves the fee-to-trust
15 acquisition, it will hold the property in trust for
16 the tribe, allowing for the development of a gaming
17 facility on the site.

18 As part of this acquisition, the National
19 Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA,
20 requires that the BIA conduct an environmental
21 compliance review before deciding whether to accept
22 the land into trust.

23 The DEIS has been prepared as an
24 intermediate step in this environmental review
25 process. The BIA published the initial notice of

1 availability of the EIS on November 25th, 2022,
2 along with and announcing a 45-day public comment
3 period. The initial public hearing was held on
4 December 15th, 2022. This is the second and final
5 public hearing.

6 In response to several requests, the
7 comment period for the draft EIS was extended by an
8 additional 45 days and will close on February 23rd,
9 2023. Additional information regarding the
10 extended review period can be found on the project
11 website at www.coquille-eis.com.

12 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to
13 facilitate public review and comments for the draft
14 EIS. We will consider all comments received during
15 the public comment period and then will publish a
16 final EIS, also known as a FEIS, which will include
17 responses to substantive comments.

18 If you would like to provide spoken
19 comment at the hearing tonight, please use the Zoom
20 "Raise Hand" feature. To raise your hand, click
21 the "Raise Hand" symbol, which is located at the
22 bottom of your screen. If you are trying to join
23 by phone, press star 9. This will place you in a
24 line to speak, and we will respond to questions in
25 the order that your hands were raised.

1 When it is your turn to speak, we will
2 call your name. We will unmute your microphone so
3 that you can give your public comment. Everyone
4 will be given three minutes to make their remarks
5 to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to
6 speak. Please remember to select star 9 again once
7 you have spoken to lower your raised hand.

8 Please note, a public hearing is not the
9 best forum for lengthy comments due to the time
10 constraints. If you have a lengthy comment, we
11 encourage you to submit a written letter.

12 All comments will receive equal weight
13 whether they are spoken or written. This evening
14 we have a stenographer here that will record your
15 spoken comments word for word so that they can be
16 considered fully as part of our administrative
17 record.

18 Please understand that the purpose of
19 tonight's hearing is not to have a
20 question-and-answer session or a debate of any
21 kind. We will not respond to questions or engage
22 in debate. Instead, we are here to listen to and
23 document your comments.

24 We have asked our EIS consultants, Acorn
25 Environmental, to provide you with a brief

1 presentation on the proposed action, its purpose
2 and need, and the alternative they analyzed in the
3 EIS and the EIS process.

4 Thank you. Have a good evening.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you and good
6 evening.

7 As noted, we will be going over the
8 purpose for this public hearing and giving an
9 overview of the process under the National
10 Environmental Policy Act, commonly known as NEPA;
11 the proposed action and alternatives; the
12 environmental impacts identified in the draft EIS;
13 and the next steps in the NEPA process. Finally,
14 we will discuss how to make public comments on the
15 draft EIS.

16 The purpose of the hearing tonight is to
17 obtain public comments and feedback on the draft
18 environmental impact statement, also known as a
19 draft EIS, prepared for the Coquille Indian Tribe
20 fee-to-trust and gaming facility project, which
21 will be referred to as the "proposed project"
22 during this presentation.

23 It should be noted that public feedback
24 and input is an integral part of the NEPA process,
25 which will be explained in later detail in the

1 presentation.

2 However, first some background on the
3 proposed action and the proposed project.

4 NEPA requires federal agencies to take
5 into account the environmental impacts of federal
6 actions and resulting projects prior to their
7 implementation. Environmental impact statements,
8 which can be abbreviated to EIS, are required for
9 major federal actions that have a potential to
10 significantly impact the quality of the
11 environment.

12 In this case, the Coquille Tribe has
13 submitted an application to the BIA requesting that
14 the Department of the Interior take approximately
15 2.4 acres located in the City of Medford into
16 federal trust for gaming purposes in accordance
17 with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. This is the
18 proposed action being considered by the BIA.

19 Once the property is in trust, the tribe
20 proposes to remodel the existing bowling alley on
21 the proposed trust property into a gaming facility.
22 The tribe will also develop parcels to the north
23 that they own in fee for surface parking.

24 The federal purpose and need for the
25 proposed action is to facilitate tribal

1 self-sufficiency, self-determination and economic
2 development to satisfy both the BIA's land
3 acquisition policy and the principal goals of the
4 Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

5 This slide illustrates the key parts in
6 the NEPA process. Scoping is the first step in the
7 process and is considered the information-gathering
8 stage. The scoping process is initiated with the
9 release of a notice of intent, or NOI. During the
10 scoping stage, input that is related to the
11 project, alternatives and environmental analysis is
12 obtained from the public and agencies.

13 After the scoping period ends, a draft EIS
14 is prepared based on the information obtained and
15 is then released for public review and comment.
16 Comments obtained during this review period are
17 considered and responded to in the final EIS. This
18 final EIS is released to the public during a 30-day
19 waiting period prior to the release and decision on
20 the project, which is summarized in a record of
21 decision, or a ROD. The ROD marks the end of the
22 NEPA process.

23 The NOI that began the scoping process was
24 published on January 15th, 2015. The scoping
25 period itself lasted from January 15th to March

1 19th, 2015. During that period, a scoping comment
2 public hearing was held on February 23rd, 2015.
3 Afterwards, a scoping report that summarized the
4 comments received during the scoping comment period
5 and the project alternatives was published in June
6 2015.

7 The draft EIS was released on November
8 25th, 2022, with the extended comment period for
9 this document closing on February 23rd, 2023. The
10 final EIS will be available for viewing during the
11 minimum waiting period of 30 days. Then, at least
12 30 days after publication of the final EIS, the BIA
13 may issue a record of decision.

14 Now we will see an overview of the draft
15 EIS itself. As seen on this slide, the components
16 of the draft EIS are organized into eight chapters
17 with an additional section for the executive
18 summary, which is not shown on this slide. An
19 overview of the proposed project and the
20 alternatives to the proposed project will be shown
21 on the following slides.

22 This map shows the location of the
23 proposed project that is known as the Medford site,
24 which the site is located in the lower right-hand
25 corner of this map. The Medford site is located

1 within the incorporated boundaries of the City of
2 Medford, adjacent to the northeastern boundary of
3 Oregon State Highway 99, also known as South
4 Pacific Highway and South Riverside Avenue.

5 In addition, the map shows the locations
6 of the two other alternative sites: the
7 approximately 49.34-acre property known as the
8 Phoenix site that is in the same corner as the
9 Medford site; and the location of the existing Mill
10 Casino, which is located in the upper left-hand
11 corner.

12 The Phoenix site is located off North
13 Phoenix Road northeast of the City of Phoenix in
14 Jackson County; and the existing Mill Casino is
15 located at 3201 Tremont Street in the City of North
16 Bend, Coos County.

17 This figure is a zoomed-in map of the
18 Medford site and Phoenix site, which can be seen in
19 closer detail now.

20 The Medford site is currently developed
21 with a bowling alley and two parking lots; and
22 nearby development mainly consists of commercial,
23 with the exception of single-family homes located
24 to the north of the site. The Medford site is
25 zoned for regional and heavy commercial

1 development.

2 The Phoenix site, on the other hand, is
3 zoned for exclusive farm use under the Jackson
4 County comprehensive plan; and it is also within
5 the Phoenix-5 urban reserve area of the Greater
6 Bear Creek Valley RPS plan.

7 This slide shows the alternatives examined
8 in the draft EIS. There are four alternatives in
9 total, which will be described in sequential order
10 starting with Alternative A.

11 Alternative A, the proposed project,
12 includes the before-mentioned transfer of 2.4 acres
13 of land into trust. It also includes retrofitting
14 and remodeling the existing Roxy Ann Lanes bowling
15 alley into an approximately 30,300-square-foot
16 gaming facility, which is approximately 7,000
17 square feet larger than the existing bowling alley.
18 A bar/deli and support services would be included
19 in the gaming facility.

20 Potable water would continue to be
21 provided by the Medford Water Commission; and the
22 tribe would continue to pay water service fees,
23 including paying for upgrades if necessary.

24 Similarly, wastewater treatment and
25 disposal would be provided by the current

1 wastewater collection system serving the Medford
2 site, Rogue Valley Sewer Services.

3 The City of Medford would continue to
4 provide law enforcement and fire protection
5 services to the Medford site, with the tribe
6 intending to work with the City of Medford to enter
7 an agreement for the provision of these services
8 and appropriate compensation.

9 During construction, it is anticipated
10 that approximately 183 onetime employment
11 opportunities would be generated. And when the
12 project is operational, it is anticipated to
13 require 229 employees.

14 This figure shows the site plan for the
15 proposed project. The approximately 7-acre Medford
16 site is shown with a red border, and the 2.4-acre
17 portion of the Medford site that is proposed to be
18 taken into trust is shown with a yellow dashed
19 border. The existing bowling alley proposed to be
20 renovated into a gaming facility is located on the
21 2.4-acre proposed trust parcel.

22 Additionally, at least 520 surface parking
23 spaces would be established on the 2.4-acre trust
24 property with additional parking utilized on the
25 remaining 4.8 acres of the Medford site that will

1 not be taken into federal trust.

2 This figure shows an architectural
3 rendering of the renovated bowling alley that will
4 be used for a gaming facility under the proposed
5 project.

6 Alternative B, the Phoenix site, is
7 similar to Alternative A, including the size of the
8 gaming facility. However, more land would be
9 transferred into trust, and the gaming facility
10 would be constructed as a new facility within an
11 approximately 7.8-acre area within the 49.34-acre
12 Phoenix site.

13 Potable water would be provided from the
14 City of Phoenix through an extension of the City's
15 facilities that would include a new booster pump.
16 Wastewater services would be provided by the same
17 provider as Alternative A, but it will require an
18 extension of a 12-inch sewer main north of Fern
19 Valley-Interstate 5 interchange along North Phoenix
20 Road. The City of Phoenix would provide law
21 enforcement and fire protection services under
22 Alternative B.

23 Alternative B is projected to create a
24 total of 206 onetime construction-related jobs,
25 which is higher than Alternative A due to the

1 construction of a new facility. The new employment
2 opportunities during operation would be very
3 similar to Alternative A due to the facility being
4 the same size.

5 This figure shows a site plan for
6 Alternative B. As shown here, the gaming facility
7 and parking development would occur in the eastern
8 portion of the Phoenix site. The proposed
9 extensions to the existing water and wastewater
10 facilities are shown as dashed blue and purple
11 lines respectively.

12 The last alternative with development,
13 Alternative C, expansion of the Mill Casino,
14 consists of expanding the tribe's existing Mill
15 Casino by approximately 5,000 square feet on the
16 10.95-acre Mill Casino site. Unlike the other two
17 alternatives discussed, a fee-to-trust acquisition
18 would not be necessary for Alternative C because
19 the Mill Casino is on land that is already in
20 federal trust for the tribe and is authorized for
21 gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act as
22 restored lands.

23 Water and wastewater services would
24 continue to be provided by Coos Bay-North Bend
25 Water Board and City of North Bend respectively.

1 Law enforcement and fire protection services would
2 continue to be provided by the City of North Bend.

3 New operational employment opportunities
4 would be approximately 84 in total, which is less
5 than the other alternatives.

6 This figure shows the site plan for
7 Alternative C. The shaded corner towards the
8 center to the right is where the proposed expansion
9 would occur.

10 With the last alternative, Alternative D,
11 no action/no development, no land will be taken
12 into trust for the benefit of the tribe and no
13 change in the current land use of the alternative
14 site locations would occur. Consequently, none of
15 the adverse or beneficial effects identified under
16 the other project alternatives would be anticipated
17 to occur.

18 With an overview of the project
19 alternatives done, we shall review the
20 environmental topics analyzed within the draft EIS
21 for each alternative. The draft EIS provides a
22 description of both the affected environment and
23 the environmental consequences associated with the
24 issue areas shown on the slide that may occur as a
25 result of the alternatives.

1 The draft EIS identifies a number of best
2 management practices and mitigation measures to
3 avoid or reduce the potential adverse environmental
4 effects resulting from the alternatives.

5 For the sake of brevity, this presentation
6 only summarizes mitigation measures identified for
7 Alternative A. For a full description of the
8 mitigation measures, please refer to Section 5 of
9 the draft EIS.

10 To prevent impacts associated with soil
11 erosion and water quality, the tribe would comply
12 with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination
13 System General Construction Permit requirements.
14 This includes the preparation of a stormwater
15 pollution prevention plan, which would require that
16 best management practices are implemented during
17 construction, such as the use of hay wattles and
18 covering stockpiles, to prevent siltation and
19 contamination of runoff.

20 To further prevent potential effects to
21 water resources, the tribe will use low-impact
22 development measures for operational stormwater
23 conveyance, detention and treatment, including the
24 installation of either vegetated bioretention
25 swales or a distributed pervious strip system

1 throughout the site, and will minimize water usage.

2 Air quality effects would be reduced
3 through the implementation of
4 fugitive-dust-prevention measures during
5 construction and other measures to reduce air
6 pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions, such as
7 limiting equipment and vehicle idling time,
8 encouraging employee and patron rideshare programs
9 and using energy-efficient lighting, air and
10 heating systems.

11 Biological resource impacts would be
12 similarly reduced with the National Pollutant
13 Discharge Elimination System General Construction
14 Permit.

15 Additionally, while the project site is
16 heavily disturbed, ornamental trees and shrubs in
17 the area do provide suitable nesting sites for
18 migratory birds. Therefore, the draft EIS requires
19 that preconstruction surveys be conducted for
20 nesting migratory birds and, if found, avoided.

21 While there are no known cultural
22 resources within the project site, the draft EIS
23 recommends monitoring by a qualified archeologist
24 during earth-moving activities. In the event of an
25 inadvertent discovery, work would stop and the

1 appropriate agency and tribe would be notified.

2 Related to socioeconomics, while most
3 economic and fiscal impacts were determined to be
4 positive, the tribe will implement policies to help
5 problem gamblers in accordance with State compact
6 requirements.

7 Several traffic mitigation measures are
8 proposed to reduce traffic-related impacts when the
9 project is operational and in the cumulative year
10 of 2042. As can be seen on the slide, the
11 improvements would primarily occur along Highway 99
12 and would include paying a fair-share contribution
13 for certain roadway segments, such as the segment
14 between South Pacific Highway and Garfield Street.

15 To prevent conflicts with surrounding land
16 uses, the proposed project will install light
17 fixtures so that they would not shed light off of
18 the Medford site and signage will be designed to be
19 compatible with the buildings.

20 In addition, the tribe will implement best
21 management practices and mitigation measures to
22 reduce noise and traffic impacts that may affect
23 surrounding land uses.

24 Measures to reduce potential impacts to
25 public services primarily consist of reducing

1 impacts to law enforcement and fire protection
2 services. Mitigation measures include installing
3 sufficient lighting and making annual payments to
4 the City of Medford Police and Fire Departments.

5 In addition, a mitigation measure would
6 ensure that waste generated from the proposed
7 project would be recycled to the extent feasible in
8 addition to utilizing environmentally-preferable
9 materials.

10 Noise generated during construction and
11 operation could disturb nearby sensitive receptors;
12 and, therefore, mitigation measures are proposed in
13 both phases of the proposed project.

14 Construction-noise-reduction measures include
15 limiting construction hours and enclosing all
16 diesel generator sites with enclosures.

17 Operational noise would be reduced through
18 shielding heating, ventilation and air-condition
19 systems and mounting them on roofs.

20 Measures to reduce the potential for
21 impacts associated with hazardous materials
22 including following best management practices for
23 filling and servicing construction equipment and
24 vehicles, using hazardous materials in accordance
25 with applicable regulatory agency protocols and

1 implementing a series of procedures if contaminated
2 soil is discovered.

3 These procedures include stopping work,
4 following U.S. EPA guidance on sampling and
5 remediation and construction personnel wearing
6 personal protective equipment and following proper
7 decontamination procedures.

8 Finally, best management practices to
9 address potential effects associated with
10 aesthetics and the introduction of additional
11 lighting include placement of lights on buildings
12 so as not to cast light or glare offsite; use of
13 shielding for all outdoor lighting so as to ensure
14 it is downcast; use of timers to limit lighting to
15 necessary times and installation of nonreflective,
16 low-glare glass on all exterior glass.

17 A hardcopy version of the draft EIS can be
18 reviewed at the Medford branch library of Jackson
19 County Library Services, located at 205 South
20 Central Avenue, Medford, Oregon 97501. A digital
21 copy can be reviewed and downloaded from the
22 project website at www.coquille-eis.com.

23 All comments on the draft EIS are due to
24 the BIA by February 23rd, 2023. After the public
25 review and comment period on the draft EIS is

1 closed, the BIA will prepare a final EIS that will
2 include responses to the comments received and
3 revisions to the draft EIS. The final EIS will be
4 made available to the public for review in a
5 similar manner as the draft EIS.

6 At least 30 days after publication of the
7 final EIS, the BIA may issue a ROD. This ROD will
8 both mark the end of the NEPA process and specify
9 the decision on whether or not to approve the
10 proposed action.

11 Written comments on the draft EIS can be
12 mailed or hand-delivered to the Bureau of Indian
13 Affairs Northwest Regional Office, whose address is
14 shown on this slide, or you can email comments to
15 coquillecasinoeis@bia.gov. When submitting written
16 comments, please include "DEIS Comments, Coquille
17 Tribe Medford Gaming Facility Project" in the email
18 subject line or at the top of a written comment
19 letter.

20 For further information on anything
21 mentioned in the presentation today and more, you
22 can contact Mr. Tobiah Mogavero with the BIA
23 Northwest Regional Office via phone or email.

24 This slide concludes the presentation.

25 At this time, we invite participants

1 wishing to provide comment to raise their hand by
2 selecting the "Raise Hand" icon on the lower
3 right-hand of your screen if you are joining by
4 computer, or by pressing star 9 if you're joining
5 by phone.

6 When it is your turn to speak, I will call
7 on you by your screen name or the last four digits
8 of your phone number. At that time, please unmute
9 yourself by clicking the microphone icon at the
10 bottom of the screen or by pressing star 6 if you
11 are joining by phone.

12 Once you are unmuted, state your name for
13 the record and then state your comment or question
14 for up to three minutes.

15 When your time is finished, I will lower
16 your hand and mute you again.

17 If you have trouble with your audio or
18 microphone, please call (949) 861-5954 for
19 technical assistance.

20 Some reminders when making your comments:
21 Please speak as clearly as possible when making
22 your comment or question so the stenographer can
23 record your comment as accurately as possible.
24 Summarize your main points and be as specific as
25 you can. And if joining by phone and computer,

1 please mute your computer speakers to avoid audio
2 feedback.

3 The first speaker will be Chairman Brenda
4 Meade of the Coquille Indian Tribe, and then we
5 will call speakers in the order they raise their
6 hands.

7 Chairman Meade, please provide your
8 comments.

9 MS. MEADE: Thank you and (speaking tribal
10 language). Greetings again, my friends. Thank you
11 for attending this second hearing for our
12 application to take 2.42 acres of land into trust.

13 I count on our trustees at the U.S.
14 Department of Interior to provide us with a fair
15 and unbiased process to receive comment on the
16 draft environmental impact statement that has taken
17 so much time and effort to prepare. This has been
18 a journey of over ten years, especially for a
19 project of this scope and size, converting an
20 existing building with gaming already offered as
21 part of its amenities.

22 During this time, we have maintained our
23 commitment to openness and transparency. We said
24 we would invest in our Medford community, and we
25 have done just that.

1 Our land-into-trust application must be
2 granted for three simple and straightforward
3 reasons.

4 One, this project will benefit not only
5 the tribe, but also the Medford economy, bringing
6 much-needed jobs and economic opportunity to this
7 region.

8 Two, placing this land into trust is one
9 step closer to righting the historic wrongs of the
10 past. Congress in our restoration act blessed the
11 designation of land for Coquille in this region as
12 a way to mitigate the disastrous impacts of
13 Congress's terrible decision to terminate my tribe.
14 That caused more Coquille people to locate here.

15 And three, despite the numerous
16 falsehoods, outright lies and dedicated efforts by
17 our opponents to exert undue political influence
18 over this process, the record before the Department
19 of Interior stands on its own. It meets all the
20 legal requirements for putting land into trust.

21 I have enjoyed watching the growing local
22 excitement for this project despite the efforts by
23 a few well-funded and self-interested opponents to
24 keep economic development out of our community.
25 Every day more people see through the noise and

1 misinformation.

2 I want to thank both the Medford City
3 Council members for supporting the tribe's
4 investment in economic development and our
5 continued efforts to bring more opportunity to the
6 Rogue Valley and to the Medford community for
7 welcoming our partnership.

8 If you are learning about this project for
9 the first time, be prepared to sift through what
10 you hear from what is true and what is untrue.
11 Think critically about phrases like "this will
12 devastate us," and consider if that has ever
13 happened in other competitive environments. Demand
14 evidence to support those claims.

15 I would like to correct the record for
16 several misstatements that have continued to
17 circulate about our project.

18 First, our opponents said the Coquille
19 Tribe was ineligible to have land placed into
20 trust, even though our restoration act and our
21 track record clearly says otherwise.

22 Then they said two acres are ineligible
23 for gaming under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.
24 But the federal government's own seasoned attorneys
25 charged with regularly making such determinations

1 concluded that we are eligible. They are eligible.

2 Then they said that there is a one-casino
3 rule in Oregon, despite the fact that two of our
4 sister tribes in Oregon already operate a second
5 gaming facility. And notably, the Oregon Joint
6 Committee on Gambling Regulations just confirmed
7 that no such rule ever existed. Sadly, some of our
8 State and federal representatives will continue to
9 carry this message despite the confirmation from
10 that Joint Committee.

11 Then we became our opponents' scapegoat
12 when in 2015 they laid off nearly a hundred people
13 during a recession and blamed it on the possibility
14 that this facility might someday eventually be
15 developed.

16 Then they engaged in revisionist history
17 tactics, publishing a new map on their ancestral
18 territory to now include Medford, when previous
19 maps on their web page described a starkly smaller
20 aboriginal area.

21 Our opponents also do not shy away from
22 distorting the facts. They produced a
23 comically-discredited study that our 2.4-acre
24 gaming center would cost the State lottery over \$22
25 million annually and cost the Cow Creek, located 75

1 miles away, 50 percent of their revenue, both of
2 which are proven to be untrue in the federal
3 government's draft EIS.

4 Then they said that our fee-to-trust
5 application was not filed under the authority of
6 our restoration act, which is clearly another false
7 attempt to create confusion and delay.

8 Then they inaccurately claimed that we
9 were requesting the Margaritaville Compass Hotel to
10 be part of our fee-to-trust application. Let me be
11 clear. It is not part of our application, and we
12 have not requested this property to go into trust.
13 Just like them, we have the right to develop
14 properties the tribe owns in fee simple status and
15 go through the municipal and other agency
16 permitting process. And we were proud to work with
17 the City of Medford to get that done.

18 This is only a sampling of the
19 misinformation that has been distributed in the
20 last ten years. Sadly, it is a fear of competition
21 that is driving our opponent to try and grab wealth
22 and jobs from Jackson County.

23 I take exception to the unsustained --
24 unsubstantiated claims that this small 2.4-acre
25 project will devastate any business anywhere. It

1 will, in fact, enhance the local economy, provide
2 more government revenue and jobs, enable more
3 philanthropy, and yes, it will benefit my tribal
4 members. You should know that at Coquille we use
5 our revenues to provide services, like health care,
6 education and elder care, to help our tribal
7 members become self-sufficient and competitive.

8 Competition is good. When a competitor
9 tribe developed a second gaming facility a mere
10 three miles away in Coos Bay, we welcomed them with
11 open arms.

12 In contrast, our opponents have fought
13 economic development not only in Medford, but in
14 Grants Pass and even 162 miles away in Salem.
15 That's more than twice as far away as our 2.42-acre
16 property. It's easy to draw your own conclusion.

17 We are not scared of the competition. We
18 do not think it will devastate anyone. Competition
19 provides far more and better options for customers,
20 better wages and benefits and opportunities for
21 employees and more contracting opportunities for
22 local businesses. We have personally seen time and
23 again that competition grows the market so that all
24 parties benefit.

25 It is also important that if our opponent

1 wishes to challenge the economic benefits of our
2 project, they should also share with the Department
3 of Interior their own economic data. The Bureau of
4 Indian Affairs has indicated that it would welcome
5 that data, but it appears that our opponent has not
6 provided it.

7 I strongly suspect that our opponent is
8 much, much better off than most Oregon tribes as
9 well as tribes in Northern California.

10 Let's let the facts speak for themselves.
11 They have enough revenue to make direct cash
12 payments to all of their tribal members, both from
13 gaming and non-gaming revenue. They can purchase
14 businesses like Klamath Basin Equipment, a going
15 concern that sells agricultural equipment to
16 farmers along the Klamath River and beyond.

17 They own businesses and properties well
18 outside their claimed ancestral territory in places
19 like Klamath Falls, Sisters, Coburg, Redmond,
20 Lakeview, Christmas Valley. The federal government
21 recently gave them over 17,000 forested acres.
22 Public record indicates that their collective
23 properties in Oregon have a market value of roughly
24 \$200 million. And they have been able to pay their
25 D.C. lobbyists over 5.5 million since this project

1 started.

2 By their own words, their casino is one of
3 the highest-rated casinos in the country. They say
4 that they own the largest bronze cast eagle statue
5 in the entire world. And in recent, pre-COVID
6 years, they reported a 20 percent increase in
7 visitor numbers to their casino as they aim to
8 become the number-one tourist attraction in the
9 entire state.

10 Let me be clear. Good for them. I
11 applaud them for doing what they think is right for
12 their members, but it should not come at a cost to
13 Medford, to Jackson County or to other tribes or
14 businesses simply trying to provide for their
15 people.

16 Why an economically-prosperous tribe would
17 be so threatened by us to generate a huge
18 opposition campaign of fear tactics and
19 misinformation is simply baffling.

20 The time has come to stop the madness. We
21 have waited over a decade to put this land into
22 trust under our restoration act to fulfill the
23 vision of Congress to restore and rebuild our tribe
24 after the devastating impacts of termination.

25 Like I said when I started my opening

1 comments, there are only three things at issue in
2 our application: economic opportunity, justice and
3 fairness. I ask that our project be evaluated on
4 the facts and law in regard to this application.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

7 The next speaker is Kevin Stine. Please
8 unmute yourself.

9 MR. STINE: Good evening. Thank you for
10 allowing the ability for me to provide testimony.

11 My name is Kevin Stine. I'm the
12 longest-serving member of the Medford City Council,
13 but I speak only for myself. For many years the
14 City of Medford has taken a neutral position on
15 this land being put into trust. I believe that is
16 appropriate for the City to do. I am personally
17 taking a positive position on this land being put
18 into trust.

19 A small backstory about myself is that I
20 spent my junior high and high school years in
21 Southeastern Oklahoma. It being Oklahoma, there
22 are many tribes across the state; but the area that
23 I lived in, the Choctaw and Cherokee tribes were
24 the most prevalent. I saw the great work they did
25 not just for their tribal members, but for the

1 community as a whole. They provide economic
2 opportunity for the region, and I have had and
3 still have many friends that work in the Choctaw
4 and Cherokee businesses. The criticism of tribal
5 gaming facilities does not match my experience.

6 When it comes to Medford, what I'm seeing
7 the Coquille Tribe do is provide that economic
8 opportunity here in Medford. The area that the
9 Coquille Tribe is developing has long been a
10 blighted area of Medford. That area is getting
11 better, and the main reason for that is because the
12 Coquille Tribe is willing to put investments into
13 it. People are excited about the recently-built
14 Margaritaville hotel and future plans for
15 entertainment in the area.

16 Importantly for the City of Medford, the
17 tribe is willing to enter a fee-for-services
18 agreement with the City. This is important not
19 only for us, but to the Coquille Tribe. We should
20 be and will be working together through this
21 process.

22 As stated previously, these words are my
23 own, but I am personally happy for the benefits
24 that the Coquille Tribe has done for our community
25 now and in the future.

1 Thank you.

2 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is JD Clarizio.

4 MR. CLARIZIO: Thank you for allowing me
5 to speak. My name is JD Clarizio. I am a resident
6 of Medford, Oregon; and I am in complete favor of
7 the new gaming facility located at Roxy Ann Lanes.

8 The arguments that are being put forth
9 against the proposed gaming facility are absolute
10 nonsense. The Cow Creek Tribe are presenting smoke
11 screens that are being repeatedly stated over and
12 over by their own employees of Seven Feathers.

13 One argument the Cow Creek Tribe state is
14 that this project will be disturbing the soil that
15 might have arsenic in it at this proposed property.

16 Then let's consider this: Within a
17 quarter mile of this site in the past ten years
18 there have been four hotels constructed and a
19 500-unit apartment complex called Charles Point
20 right behind the facility along with numerous other
21 businesses. And more recently, there has been two
22 gas stations built with stores, a Five Guys
23 restaurant, KFC, Cracker Barrel and a large complex
24 of the Rogue Valley Credit Union.

25 On the other side of the Highway 99 is a

1 new Panera Bread going in. A Jamba Juice and a
2 strip mall are being constructed next to Harry &
3 David, along with newly-constructed condominiums
4 next to Stewart Meadows, all within one-quarter
5 mile of this site.

6 And if you drive up and down the Highway
7 99, there is massive construction up -- for up to
8 over five miles, down to the City of Talent, with
9 new homes, modular homes, businesses, even a new
10 Harley-Davidson store, all in the same orchard soil
11 they claim is arsenic infested; and yet all of
12 these businesses and homesites are being built,
13 permitted, by each of these cities. All these
14 projects are disturbing the soil and being
15 permitted by these cities, but they are doing it
16 safely accordingly.

17 And yet the Coquille Tribe project is a
18 remodel job on an existing site, making very little
19 disturbance to the soil at all. So enough of this
20 smoke-screen argument. Let's look at the facts and
21 the construction that's actually going on up and
22 down this highway.

23 The Cow Creek Tribe also has stated
24 there'd be runoff from this site into Bear Creek,
25 which is absolutely absurd. There is no drainage

1 ditches flowing from the proposed site. If any
2 water ever tried to reach Bear Creek, it would have
3 to cross over 12 acres of grass to even reach the
4 creek.

5 I have a degree in turfgrass and landscape
6 management from Oregon State; and I can
7 emphatically say that the little bit of parking lot
8 runoff from this site would never make it more than
9 50 feet past the property, yet alone across 12
10 acres. It's just another smoke-screen argument
11 they are proposing to confuse people and make them
12 fearful of the project.

13 Isn't it a little bit interesting and a
14 bit obvious these manufactured arguments are all
15 coming from one specific business over 70 miles
16 away and not from the local community of Medford?

17 THE MODERATOR: Mr. Clarizio, can you
18 please conclude --

19 MR. CLARIZIO: They make it sound like
20 there is a lot of negative impact to the Seven
21 Feathers business that is over an hour away from
22 Medford, claiming that the Coquille Tribe is
23 intruding upon their economic welfare, so they
24 create these ridiculous arguments. However --

25 THE MODERATOR: Mr. Clarizio, can you

1 please conclude your comments? Your three minutes
2 are up.

3 MR. CLARIZIO: Okay.

4 However, they are allowed to put
5 billboards for over 300 miles up and down I-5
6 advertising all about their business. Their basic
7 interest is maintaining a monopolized dominance
8 over their business up and down I-5 at the -- by
9 obstructing the project that they are trying to
10 produce here in Medford for the Coquille Tribe that
11 would benefit the economic development in the
12 Medford area.

13 Thank you.

14 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

15 The next commenter is Judy Farm. Please
16 unmute yourself.

17 MS. FARM: Thank you.

18 My name is Judy Farm, and I am the CEO of
19 the Coquille Tribe's Economic Development
20 Corporation. I have worked in Jackson County for
21 the tribe in various positions over the last 25
22 years.

23 My testimony tonight addresses concerns
24 about the impacts of our proposed 2.4-acre Class II
25 gaming center on other Class III casino resorts

1 that are located miles away.

2 The Coquille Tribe is uniquely positioned
3 to be able to provide real-time data on the impact
4 of a Class II gaming facility. In 2015 the Coos
5 Confederated Tribes opened a Class II facility in
6 Coos Bay that is comparable to what we have
7 proposed for Medford. The Coos Class II facility
8 is located a mere four miles away from the Mill
9 Casino Hotel & RV Park.

10 We embraced the competition and committed
11 to increasing our customer experience and raising
12 the bar. We even took out a full-page ad in the
13 local newspaper to welcome them in the new business
14 venture.

15 This Class II facility located in our
16 shallow, rural market made a small impact to our
17 revenues; but we, in fact, recovered from this
18 impact within a short period of time. Today both
19 tribes and the community benefit from the
20 competition and the additional jobs and community
21 investment that it brings.

22 These benefits of tribal gaming
23 competition mirror what we have seen elsewhere in
24 the state. Take, for instance, the addition of the
25 Cowlitz's Class III casino and resort, the ilani

1 Casino, which opened in 2017.

2 The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
3 opposed that project. At the time, Grand Ronde's
4 lobbyist Justin Martin stated in Willamette Week,
5 "This will be a big financial hit to the tribe..."
6 The Grand Ronde Tribe forecasted that Cowlitz
7 casino would cause a loss of just over \$100 million
8 by using a market projection based on distance from
9 market and estimated drive time.

10 Similarly, the Oregon Lottery raised
11 concerns and had dire forecasts claiming that the
12 Cowlitz project would cut State lottery revenues by
13 40 percent.

14 However, a year after the Cowlitz casino
15 opened, the Oregon State Office of Economic
16 Analysis in a report to the Oregon Lottery board
17 stated, "Video lottery sales in zip codes along the
18 Oregon-Washington border in the Portland region
19 have fallen about 15 percent instead of the 40
20 percent expected." They further went on to say
21 that "Our office was not alone in overestimating
22 the initial impact of the new casino. The
23 Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, owners of
24 Spirit Mountain Casino, which previously were the
25 closest casino to the Portland metro region,

1 announced back in the fall that sales had fallen
2 about 17 percent, relative to the previous year,
3 whereas the forecasted sales would fall by 40
4 percent."

5 Moreover, later in 2018 the Oregon Lottery
6 reported that projected losses due to the ilani
7 Casino did not materialize. Instead, the State
8 retroactively characterized its projected Lottery
9 losses as "rather aggressive," and added that the
10 ilani development resulted only in an impact of 1
11 to 1.3 percent of annual video Lottery revenue.

12 We know that --

13 THE MODERATOR: Ms. Farm, please conclude
14 your comments.

15 MS. FARM: Sure.

16 Customers seeking a fun and local gaming
17 experience would not be exposed to the hazards of
18 traveling over mountain passes during inclement
19 weather on one of the most dangerous interstate
20 stretches in rural Oregon.

21 Jackson County residents will reduce
22 automobile carbon emissions when they choose a
23 local gaming experience.

24 In closing, we have not been allowed this
25 regulatory process for over ten years due to

1 another business deploying barrier-to-entry
2 tactics.

3 The impacts of this project to the Jackson
4 County community in terms of investment, jobs and
5 community partnership greatly outweigh any small
6 but recoverable economic impact to regional
7 competition. I request that these overwhelmingly
8 positive impacts be considered in the NEPA
9 evaluation as evaluation of this project moves
10 forward.

11 Thank you.

12 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

13 A reminder to speakers that are waiting
14 and raise their hands: We have a three-minute time
15 limit for providing comments in order to allow
16 everyone to provide -- or have the opportunity to
17 speak.

18 The next commenter is Joe Benetti.

19 Please unmute yourself.

20 MR. BENETTI: All right.

21 Good evening. I am Joe Benetti, the mayor
22 of Coos Bay. The City of Coos Bay is adjacent to
23 North Bend, where the Mill Casino Hotel & RV Park
24 is located.

25 THE REPORTER: Mr. Benetti, this is the

1 court reporter.

2 MR. BENETTI: Yes.

3 THE REPORTER: If you would mind slowing
4 down, I would very much appreciate it.

5 MR. BENETTI: Pardon?

6 THE REPORTER: I said, "Mr. Benetti, this
7 is the court reporter. If you would mind slowing
8 down, I would very much appreciate it."

9 MR. BENETTI: Absolutely. Do you want me
10 to start over?

11 THE REPORTER: Thank you. Thank you. I
12 would appreciate that.

13 MR. BENETTI: Okay.

14 Good evening. I am Joe Benetti, the mayor
15 of Coos Bay. The City of Coos Bay is adjacent to
16 North Bend, where the Mill Casino Hotel & RV Park
17 is located.

18 A casino in Medford would have a positive
19 impact on the Medford and Jackson County area in
20 many ways.

21 The EIS shows that the creation of jobs
22 during construction would be 78 jobs and an
23 additional 229 direct jobs, which will lead to an
24 additional 131 jobs, for a total of 360 jobs
25 start -- to start with, which will increase and

1 help boost the labor market in Medford and Jackson
2 County. The Coquille Indian Tribe in the Coos
3 Bay-North Bend area employs over 800 today.

4 There are two tribally-owned casinos in
5 the Coos Bay-North Bend area. Besides the Mill
6 Casino owned by the Coquille Indian Tribe located
7 in North Bend, there is the Three Rivers Casino
8 which is situated in Coos Bay, owned by the
9 Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and
10 Siuslaw Indian Tribes. Both casinos are
11 significant economic benefit to our community.

12 A casino owned by the Coquille Indian
13 Tribe in Medford will also help boost tourism. As
14 we have seen in our community, the Mill Casino
15 drives thousands of visitors to our area. In
16 addition to their own marketing efforts, they
17 voluntarily contribute transient-lodging tax
18 revenues to our local destination market
19 organization, helping promote the entire region.

20 The Coquille Tribal Community Fund was
21 established to share the proceeds of the Mill
22 Casino Hotel with organizations that will benefit
23 residents of Southwestern Oregon, which includes
24 the Medford-Jackson County area. Creating the
25 Medford casino would increase the fund proceeds

1 distributed to Southwestern Oregon residents. This
2 year the Coquille Tribal Community Fund shared
3 \$800,000.

4 The EIS for the Medford project projects
5 \$18.6 million in direct economic impact and an
6 additional \$16.4 million in indirect and induced
7 economic impact, totalling more than \$34 million.

8 What the EIS doesn't show is what a
9 positive influence a Coquille tribally-owned casino
10 would have on Medford-Jackson County.

11 The Coquille Tribe has played a
12 significant role in the growth of Coos County, and
13 we are grateful for their partnership and
14 contributions to our region.

15 I appreciate the opportunity to testify
16 before you this evening about the benefits of the
17 Coquille tribally-owned casino in Medford.

18 Thank you.

19 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

20 The next speaker is Boomer Wright.

21 MR. WRIGHT: Well, good evening, members
22 of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I am State
23 Representative Boomer Wright, and I represent
24 coastal District 9. I am honored to have the
25 Coquille Tribe in my district. Thank you for

1 allowing me to testify on behalf of the tribe and
2 their efforts regarding their Medford casino
3 project. My testimony is as follows:

4 The tribe has demonstrated continual
5 history of caring for people in the communities.
6 For many years through the expansion of health care
7 opportunities, the tribe has created access to care
8 for thousands of Native Americans and for
9 Oregonians in Southwestern Oregon. The primary
10 care clinics in Coos Bay and Eugene create no-cost
11 care, positively impacting the socioeconomic status
12 of many of the neediest families.

13 Being the State Representative for
14 District 9, I have observed that community is a way
15 of life for the Coquille Tribe.

16 Most recently, the tribe has led the
17 development of comanagement agreements with the
18 Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife with a
19 philosophy of no waste and commitment to serving
20 the fall Chinook salmon in the Coquille River. The
21 tribe has given their time and resources, leading
22 to immediate improvements in salmon returns.

23 The tribe has also coordinated access to
24 funding resources that are moving a long-overdue
25 estuary rehabilitation project forward, directly

1 improving and positively impacting the environment.

2 As a member of the Oregon Legislature's
3 Joint Committee on Gambling, we determined that
4 there is no rule in Oregon that limits the number
5 of casinos that a tribe can operate. Mark Twain
6 once famously said, "A lie can get halfway around
7 the world before the truth can even get its pants
8 on." It seems to me that that's what's happened
9 here. I was glad to see the Joint Legislative
10 Committee clear up that nonsense.

11 Finally, the Coquille Indian Tribe's
12 positive environmental and socioeconomic impacts
13 are significant, and I am excited about the future
14 opportunities that exist in Medford as we continue
15 to develop our partnership with the Coquille Indian
16 Tribe.

17 Therefore, I am expressing my support for
18 the Coquille Tribe's economic development in
19 Medford due to the positive environmental and
20 socioeconomic benefits the project will provide.

21 Thank you.

22 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

23 The next speaker is Marcus Holcumb.

24 Marcus, it appears that we're having an
25 issue with your Zoom. If you could please call the

1 help line on the screen, they'll be able to assist
2 you. And we will give you -- be given a chance to
3 speak.

4 The next speaker is Brian Cassidy.

5 MR. CASSIDY: Hello. My name is Brian
6 Cassidy. I am in favor for the EIS application
7 approval. I'm just a citizen, but I'm a worker.

8 And there's a lot of jobs that need to be
9 created in this area. There's very little work to
10 provide for your family. I have done all sorts of
11 jobs, hard-labor jobs.

12 The cannabis industry promised to bring in
13 really good jobs. And to be honest, they're not
14 very good. They don't take taxes out. There's no
15 health care. There's no access to health care.
16 There's no paid time off. There's no sick time.
17 The tribe offers all of these things as well as a
18 good wage. It's going to create a lot of jobs.

19 And with that, the people will have money
20 to spend. And the more money they can spend, the
21 more that they are going to buy, which just -- it's
22 a -- it just trickles down to all the other
23 businesses in the area. And it's a win for
24 everybody.

25 And the only thing I can say about there

1 being increased traffic, I'm not really concerned
2 about the traffic. What I'm concerned about is the
3 amount of drunk drivers that are possibly driving
4 home from Seven Feathers down to here every night.
5 There's cab fares. There's Ubers. There's
6 friends. There's all sorts of ways in the City of
7 Medford to get home if you can't drive. But if
8 you're at Seven Feathers, it really concerns me how
9 many people are on the road that should not be.

10 So I am in favor for that, and I thank you
11 for your time.

12 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

13 The next speaker is Renie. Please
14 unmute --

15 MS. DOSHIER: Yes.

16 I would like to register as being in
17 approval for this project. I lived in Southern
18 Oregon for a long time; and the jobs I have had,
19 people would say, "Gee, you could do that job
20 somewhere else, in California, and make more
21 money." And I think this is a good project that
22 will bring good-paying jobs and a lot of good
23 business vendors to help out with the economy in
24 the Southern Oregon area.

25 That end of town is just now starting to

1 come into its own. It's been in a blight for
2 years. And it would be great to see more
3 businesses built there, and this is a good start.

4 And I really am in support of all Native
5 Americans getting the chance to help themselves
6 with these projects. And I hope everything goes
7 well.

8 I thank you.

9 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Mark Johnston. Please
11 unmute yourself.

12 MR. JOHNSTON: Can you hear me now?

13 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

14 MR. JOHNSTON: Great. Thank you.

15 Good evening. My name is Mark Johnston;
16 and I live in Coos County, Oregon. I am the
17 executive director for the Coquille Indian tribal
18 government. I appreciate the opportunity to speak
19 and share my thoughts this evening.

20 Tonight I focus my comments on potential
21 environmental impacts, specifically socioeconomic
22 impacts that I have experienced over my 28 years
23 working in Indian country and multiple tribal
24 government settings in the Northwest.

25 I have witnessed and seen positive impacts

1 of family-wage jobs created by tribal entities.
2 Research tells us that low wages hurt families and
3 perpetuate poverty. Tribes have shown their
4 positive impact on communities by providing
5 family-wage jobs with excellent benefits, in many
6 cases becoming the largest employers in their
7 communities.

8 Additionally, across Indian country you
9 will see tribal health care facilities that provide
10 essential medical, dental, pharmacy and behavioral
11 health care. This care is provided at no
12 out-of-pocket cost for American Indians and Alaska
13 Natives. This culturally-appropriate care is
14 currently not available in Jackson County.

15 Having worked for the Coquille Tribe for a
16 combined 15 years, I expect that the tribe will
17 enhance health care opportunities in Jackson County
18 to support American Indians and Alaska Natives and
19 their economic-venture employees through direct
20 care and other self-funded insurance plans --
21 excuse me -- and are a self-funded insurance plan.

22 Oregon Health Plan data shows that
23 approximately 3,000 American Indian Alaska Natives
24 are currently enrolled on the plan and living in
25 Jackson County. The Oregon Health Plan, or

1 Medicaid, is for the lowest-income residents in our
2 communities. They traditionally struggle with
3 accessing primary health care. The potential
4 addition of a tribal health care facility in
5 Medford will improve access to care and ultimately
6 improve health outcomes.

7 It is a two-way street. Socioeconomic
8 status is a major determinant of health, with
9 people of lower socioeconomic status being at
10 increased risk of premature mortality, development
11 of serious conditions such as coronary heart
12 disease, diabetes, depression and other health
13 outcomes at older ages, including disability and
14 dementia. Ultimately, data and examples across the
15 Northwest show that access to
16 culturally-appropriate, no-out-of-pocket health
17 care will improve the socioeconomic status of
18 thousands of the most needy American Indian Alaska
19 Natives in Southwestern Oregon.

20 Thank you for allowing me to share my
21 real-life experience of the expansion of tribal
22 economic enterprises and its very visible impact on
23 socioeconomic status. I support the Coquille's
24 economic development in Medford due to the positive
25 socioeconomic benefits the project will provide.

1 Thank you.

2 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is Barbara Duey. Please
4 unmute yourself. Barbara Duey, if you could please
5 unmute yourself.

6 Okay. Moving on to the next speaker,
7 Laurabeth Barton.

8 MS. BARTON: Good evening. My name is
9 Laurabeth Barton, and I'm a Coquille tribal elder
10 and a tribal council member. Throughout my career,
11 I've been a small-business owner. I have worked in
12 the Governor's office for the State of Alaska, and
13 I served for over 15 years as vice-chair of the
14 Coquille Indian Gaming Commission, which provides
15 regulatory oversight to the Mill Casino.

16 In 1954 Congress terminated my tribe,
17 declaring that we did not matter to them as Indian
18 people indigenous to Southern Oregon. Throughout
19 later decades, our tribal members and elders fought
20 to restore our tribe. And in 1989 our efforts
21 resulted in Congress passing the Coquille
22 Restoration Act.

23 But much damage had already been done as a
24 result of the federal government's disastrous and
25 abusive policies.

1 Many of our tribal members joined family
2 in the Medford area to seek a better chance at
3 subsistence. We suffered greatly through disease,
4 starvation and displacement; but we have survived;
5 and we will not go away.

6 Every congressional restoration act is
7 unique. In our tribe's act, Congress very clearly
8 emphasized a need for Coquille economic
9 self-sufficiency and self-determination.

10 Our tribal constitution prohibits us from
11 distributing money to our tribal members through
12 per-capita payments. Instead, our elders and the
13 federal government felt the best way to assist our
14 members was by creating the conditions for our
15 people to become self-sufficient. We do this by
16 providing health care for our tribal families,
17 education for our youth, care of our elders and
18 providing jobs and opportunities for our people and
19 community.

20 Our tribe is growing, and the cost of
21 providing these services is growing as well. Our
22 ability to expand these services and the capital
23 improvements that we need are constrained by our
24 current resources.

25 Our efforts in Medford are an example of

1 doing exactly what Congress intended when they
2 restored our tribe. We are providing for our
3 people and enhancing the communities where we do
4 business. We are not developing a mega-casino
5 resort on scores of acres. This is a 2.4-acre
6 Class II gaming facility that will assist in
7 supporting our tribe's current and future
8 generations.

9 I am in favor of this project; and in
10 terms of the NEPA impacts, I am providing testimony
11 to the positive economic impacts to both Medford
12 and the Coquille Tribe.

13 Thank you.

14 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

15 The next speaker is Arnie Roblan.

16 MR. ROBLAN: Hi. Can you hear me?

17 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

18 MR. ROBLAN: This is Arnie Roblan. I am
19 the retired principal at Marshfield High School in
20 Coos Bay and a retired 16-year House of
21 Representatives and Senator from the State of
22 Oregon who has represented this area most of my
23 adult life in one way or another, and the Coquille
24 Tribe has been a part of that the entire time.

25 I have three impacts that I want to talk

1 about in a positive way.

2 The first is impacts on the job market.
3 And I have -- we have already heard, but it's clear
4 that the EIS demonstrates that there are 78
5 construction jobs that will be short-term, along
6 with 229 direct jobs and an additional 131 jobs in
7 an area where the local residents are seeking
8 opportunities to work. And we have heard some of
9 that today already. These are new jobs that will
10 help boost the value of labor throughout the city
11 and county. Most of these jobs will be eligible
12 for benefits that will improve access to health
13 care for the families of workers.

14 Number two, impacts on the local economy.
15 This project will add to the local economy, first,
16 by creating the spending power of up to 200 new
17 jobs in the community; and a second, by opening
18 vendor opportunities for local businesses to
19 provide goods and services for the new gaming
20 facility. The draft EIS projects the project will
21 produce 18.6 million in direct economic impacts and
22 an additional 16.4 million in indirect and induced
23 economic impact.

24 And finally, impacts on the quality of
25 life. Let's face it. Another entertainment option

1 in Medford is a plus for the life of this
2 community. Folks who enjoy gambling entertainment
3 can do so in a safe, clean environment with
4 top-rate security and plenty of amenities without
5 having to drive long distances on busy highways.

6 As the high school principal in Coos Bay
7 at Marshfield, I came to really appreciate all of
8 the other services that the Coquille Tribe offers.
9 In particular, their community fund, which began in
10 2001, has given away -- given to local community
11 efforts over \$7 million. It is imperative that the
12 opportunities that have been given to us in Coos
13 Bay can be extended to the people of Medford.

14 I encourage you to support this new
15 investment in the area.

16 Thank you.

17 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

18 A reminder to attendees: This webinar is
19 set to listen only. If you raised your hand to
20 speak, I will give you the opportunity to unmute
21 yourself once your name is called.

22 The next speaker is Laurabeth Barton. Are
23 you unable to unmute yourself?

24 MS. BARTON: Yes, I'm here. I have
25 already spoken.

1 THE MODERATOR: Oh, so apologies.

2 THE REPORTER: And to the moderator, that
3 was the court reporter who actually took herself
4 off of mute because the last handful of people have
5 been very quickly speaking to get in within their
6 three minutes, but I would appreciate that they
7 remember that I am still taking this down verbatim.

8 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is Lily
9 Morgan.

10 MS. MORGAN: Okay. Now can you hear me?

11 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

12 MS. MORGAN: Thank you.

13 Good evening. My name is Lily Morgan. I
14 am a Representative in the Oregon Legislature
15 representing House District 3, which is located in
16 Southern Oregon and includes the City of Grants
17 Pass. I am speaking in support of the Coquille
18 Indian Tribe and their application for a Class II
19 casino license in Medford.

20 I have had the opportunity to work with
21 the Coquille and have been impressed by their
22 commitment to the community and their overall
23 ethics. They have consistently invested in the
24 local communities that they serve and have proven
25 to be a strong partner, interested in the

1 betterment of the communities they serve.

2 The proposed project will mean additional
3 jobs and millions in additional income for
4 residents of Medford and Jackson County.

5 Additionally, the revenue from the proposed casino
6 will result in an increase in charitable giving by
7 the Coquille for the local community. They have
8 been a strong supporter of our local hospital.

9 In short, this project will have a major
10 impact on the economic development for this
11 community. Many in my area work in Jackson County,
12 and 233 additional jobs will help the poorest
13 districts in the state.

14 Unfortunately, in my district, I have
15 witnessed a community miss out on the creation of
16 hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars added to
17 our local economy when opposition stopped an
18 entertainment center-racino from moving forward.
19 It is my hope that this community does not endure
20 the same outcome.

21 Alternative A represents an area
22 previously designated by Congress to make the
23 Coquille Tribe whole. As a local official, I urge
24 you to approve the Coquille application Alternative
25 A and help support economic development for our

1 local communities.

2 Thank you.

3 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

4 The next speaker is Sam Smith.

5 MS. SMITH: Hi. My name is Sam Smith, and
6 I have lived in Medford for the last 13 years. I
7 wanted to speak today to voice my strong support of
8 this project.

9 I currently work at the Compass by
10 Margaritaville hotel that's built next to Roxy Ann
11 Lanes. I'm working for and with the best people I
12 have in my career, who are really dedicated to
13 their employees. I have never worked for a company
14 that cares so much and is so dedicated to the
15 continued growth and training of all of their
16 employees. They encourage both personal and skill
17 development and offer continuous opportunities for
18 growth that you -- so that you never stop learning
19 and continuously challenge yourself.

20 Seeing the potential for this company to
21 grow to offer 229 more direct jobs to people in our
22 valley and our community is incredibly exciting.

23 I know that having this pushed through
24 would have a large and positive economic impact in
25 the valley, generating 373 indirect jobs on top of

1 all the direct ones and pouring an estimated \$6.1
2 million into our local economy for services and
3 products within a year.

4 Honestly, it's insane to me that this
5 project has been in progress for a decade and
6 hasn't yet been green-lit when it will do so much
7 good for the people of Medford and for the Coquille
8 Tribe.

9 A big part of my excitement for this
10 project is the entertainment option being added in
11 Medford. Starting out here at the hotel and
12 working at the front desk, we've had so many people
13 come in, especially from the Rogue Valley Manor, a
14 senior community, talking about the potential of
15 getting a casino and how much they would love to
16 have an option nearby that they could visit when
17 they no longer drive.

18 There are tons of people who live on the
19 other side of town as well, in North Medford, that
20 rarely visit South Medford because they don't have
21 any reason to. Everything they need is right
22 there. Giving them that incentive to drive the 10
23 or 15 minutes down the road will expose them to all
24 the other businesses in the area as well and drive
25 foot traffic to those businesses.

1 I truly believe that this project would
2 add so much value to our local community, economy,
3 friends, family and the Coquille Tribe.

4 Thank you.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

6 The next speaker is Kendra Doshier.

7 MS. DOSHIER: Thank you so much for your
8 time.

9 I wanted to say that I was for and
10 positively for Position A. I've been in this area
11 roughly 30 years, and I have seen that specific
12 area where that bowling alley has gotten a bit
13 destitute. And I'd really like to see it rebuilt,
14 especially into something that we don't have here:
15 adult entertainment that incorporates, you know, a
16 lot more than just going to a bar and seeing the
17 regular dance floor.

18 Having that revenue for the tribe is going
19 to be amazing for the future generations ahead
20 along with the economy now.

21 So that's my statement. Thank you for
22 your time.

23 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

24 The next speaker is Armand Crispen.

25 Armand, please unmute yourself. Armand, if you are

1 having difficulties -- oh. Armand, please state
2 your comments.

3 I'm sorry, Armand. We are unable to hear
4 you. If you are having difficulties, please call
5 (949) 861-5954 for technical assistance.

6 The next speaker is Jamie Painter.

7 MS. PAINTER: Hi. Good evening. My name
8 is Jamie Painter, and I'm a field representative
9 for Congressman Earl Blumenauer, who represents the
10 Third District of Oregon.

11 On behalf of the Congressman, I'd like to
12 thank the agency for scheduling a second hearing.
13 As you know, this decision will impact the entire
14 region, beyond the Medford area, so we appreciate
15 having this opportunity to weigh in directly.

16 I'd like to be clear that Congressman
17 Blumenauer continues to believe that the "one
18 casino per tribe" is the best approach. The
19 Congressman is concerned that this decision will
20 lead to a proliferation of casinos across the
21 state, the impacts of which will be felt all the
22 way to Washington and California.

23 But beyond that, it's important to
24 acknowledge that our four tribes have opposed --
25 that four tribes have opposed this proposal because

1 of the effect it will have on the current balance
2 of gaming within the state and across the region.

3 Moreover, the Congressman has been made
4 aware of certain remaining concerns that the draft
5 environmental impact statement does not consider
6 the full scope of impacts from the proposed
7 project, including the Coquille's use of the
8 restored lands exception for this application. The
9 restored lands exception was not established by
10 Congress with the intent of benefiting one tribal
11 government over others. Congressman Blumenauer
12 urges the agency to ensure that any use of this
13 rule will not create any unfair imbalances in
14 tribal gaming.

15 In terms of the project, the original
16 notice of intent was published in 2015. Our office
17 understands that the Coquille have made changes to
18 the project since then and that the scope of the
19 project as analyzed in the draft statement may not
20 be updated to reflect those changes. The
21 Congressman urges the agency to ensure that the
22 scope of this statement reflects the most
23 up-to-date proposal.

24 In terms of the materials, the Congressman
25 urges the agency to ensure that all materials and

1 reports under consideration should reflect the most
2 up-to-date proposal, including any changes to the
3 project or context since 2015.

4 The Congressman is also concerned about
5 traffic. Specifically, our office understands that
6 the draft statement states that the proposed
7 project will not result in "unacceptable traffic
8 operations" and will not require mitigation.

9 However, we have heard concerns that this
10 may be based on analysis from 2019. The
11 Congressman urges the agency to ensure that this
12 analysis is fully up to date.

13 Our office has also heard certain
14 questions about the impacts of the proposal on Bear
15 Creek and the local species currently listed for
16 protection under the Endangered Species Act. The
17 Congressman urges the agency to ensure that they
18 are fully considering any impact to habitat and
19 endangered species in the area.

20 Finally, the Congressman encourages the
21 agency to consider any reasonable non-gaming
22 alternatives through which the Coquille may achieve
23 their stated purpose of economic development.

24 Once again, on behalf of Congressman
25 Blumenauer, I deeply appreciate the opportunity to

1 participate in this hearing. Overall, the
2 Congressman supports a robust public input process
3 and full consideration of that input with respect
4 to next steps. Thank you very much.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

6 The next speaker is Marcus Holcumb, last
7 digits 3826. Please unmute yourself by pressing
8 star 6.

9 MR. HOLCUMB: Hi. Thank you.
10 Can you hear me?

11 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

12 MR. HOLCUMB: Yes. Thank you very much.

13 I am testifying here to show support for
14 this project and the importance of the job creation
15 that this can help with in the Southern Oregon
16 area.

17 We all know there has been a real
18 challenge to have higher-paying jobs that are
19 consistent, and this type of employment is going to
20 last. It's the type of employment that you're not
21 going to have to worry about the company going out
22 of business in a healthy, developing area of
23 Medford as well.

24 This project is a critical part for the
25 expansion of good jobs and retirement plans and

1 health care for a lot of people that are looking
2 for those things in Southern Oregon, and I just
3 wanted to share that.

4 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Kelly Coates. Please
6 unmute yourself.

7 MS. COATES: Hello. Can you hear me?

8 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

9 MS. COATES: My name is Kelly Coates. I
10 am a member of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe
11 of Indians. I also serve as the director of
12 natural resources for the tribe.

13 As a citizen who lives in Talent, Oregon,
14 I am extremely concerned with the impact of the
15 proposed action on my tribe and my local community.

16 The DEIS underestimates the impact on the
17 local community and fails to adequately analyze the
18 socioeconomic impacts on my tribe. The DEIS admits
19 that the proposed action will have a substantial
20 economic impact on my tribe. It states that the
21 proposed action will decrease the projected gaming
22 revenue of my tribe by 25 percent and that it will
23 take over 16 years for my tribe to recover.

24 However, we believe that the actual impact
25 of the proposed action will be much greater. The

1 economic analysis is based on an impact study done
2 in 2019, over three years ago. The world has
3 changed greatly. This is an impact study that was
4 done pre-COVID. It doesn't anticipate the
5 potential upcoming recession. It doesn't include
6 the cost of inflation. The impact study needs to
7 be updated.

8 Regardless, decreasing the potential
9 revenue of my tribe by at least 25 percent will
10 massively impact operations. With such a huge
11 decrease in revenue, my tribe will be unable to
12 support a large portion of its existing
13 governmental operations, programs and services.
14 This means less money to care for our members and
15 the local community, less funding for health
16 services, educational programs and programs that
17 take care of our elders. Accordingly, the quality
18 of life of our tribal members, which is already
19 below the quality of life enjoyed by most other
20 people in Oregon, would be significantly harmed.

21 The DEIS fails to recognize this, merely
22 concluding only that the revenue is enough for
23 tribal governments "to provide services to their
24 respective memberships." The DEIS needs to be
25 updated to recognize the substantial impact the

1 proposed action will have on the ability of local
2 tribes to provide essential governmental services
3 to its members.

4 Further, these substantial costs are being
5 borne by the local community to benefit a tribe
6 that has no meaningful connection to Medford. The
7 Medford site is 168 miles from the Coquille's
8 offices in its casino in North Bend, Oregon. The
9 distance is a three-hour drive over the Coast Range
10 mountains, the Grave Creek Hills and then across
11 the Rogue Valley.

12 The Coquille Indian Tribe has no
13 aboriginal or historical connections to Medford.
14 The Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe has ancestral ties to
15 the area and shares the Takelma language of the
16 Native Americans of the Rogue River Valley.

17 If the Coquille Tribe wants to expand
18 gaming and in turn support their membership, why
19 not seriously consider the North Bend alternative
20 in the DEIS, which is clearly within their
21 aboriginal territory? This alternative will not
22 impact my tribe or our ability to provide services
23 for our members.

24 The DEIS should consider the impact to the
25 local community. A substantial cost will be paid

1 for this proposed action. Local tribes will
2 suffer, and all to benefit a tribe that has no
3 meaningful ancestral connection to the area.

4 That concludes my comments. But I also
5 have Armand Crispen here, who is ready to give his
6 comments.

7 THE REPORTER: Once again, this is the
8 stenographer. And I do understand that everyone is
9 very emotional about this issue. But if you could
10 please slow down so I am accurately recording
11 everything that you are saying, I would very much
12 appreciate it.

13 THE MODERATOR: Armand Crispen.

14 MR. CRISPEN: Yes. Thank you very much.

15 My name is Armand Crispen. I am a member
16 of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.
17 I live in Medford, Oregon. As a local resident, I
18 am very concerned with the impact of the proposed
19 action on my local community.

20 First, the impact to traffic. We live in
21 an area -- my family routinely drives Highway 99
22 between Medford and Talent. I'm extremely
23 concerned with the traffic issues that will result
24 along Highway 99 as a result of this project. The
25 DEIS severely underestimates the impact that a

1 casino would have on the traffic in Medford. The
2 DEIS claims that the casino will not result in
3 "unacceptable traffic operations..." This -- and
4 states that, "No mitigation is necessary."
5 However, I believe there will be significant
6 impacts. The traffic impact analysis drafted in
7 2019 needs to be updated beyond the two-page update
8 that only discussed the hotel.

9 Second, this area already suffers from
10 issues with the transient homeless population along
11 Bear Creek. A casino will exacerbate the problem.
12 This problem isn't examined in the DEIS. The BIA
13 should ensure that the proposed action will not add
14 to this problem.

15 Third, the DEIS underestimates the impact
16 that a casino will have on crime. The Mill Casino
17 generates the most police calls for any one
18 location in North Bend, 640 calls annually. A
19 casino in Medford will significantly increase the
20 rate of crime. The DEIS calls for payments to the
21 Medford Police Department to mitigate the increase
22 in crime, but that does not account for the impact
23 on local residents. The DEIS dismisses the impacts
24 to residents as "less than significant."

25 As a local resident, an increase in crime

1 in this area resulting in the police being called
2 twice a night is significant; and the DEIS should
3 be modified to take into account not only the
4 additional police costs, but the impact to local
5 residents.

6 Finally, I think that many of the issues
7 with the DEIS stem from the fact that it is based
8 on outdated materials. The project has changed
9 significantly since the DEIS was first initiated in
10 2015. It now includes a hotel, pool, bar and
11 grill. Many of the reports that the DEIS relies on
12 are from 2015-2016. The few updates that have been
13 made were made in 2019, four years ago. The DEIS
14 and the underlying studies need to be updated in
15 order to take into consideration the full impact of
16 the project.

17 Thank you.

18 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

19 The next speaker is Virgle Osborne.

20 MR. OSBORNE: Hello. Hopefully you can
21 hear me. Good evening.

22 THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can.

23 MR. OSBORNE: So I wanted to touch base
24 tonight on my opposition to this. As a local
25 resident of the district and an Oregon State

1 Representative for House District 2 in Southern
2 Oregon, I am coming you -- to you tonight
3 announcing my opposition to the project the
4 Coquille Tribe is proposing in Medford.

5 Because of my position as a duly-elected
6 Representative, I would like to focus on the
7 potential damages the proposed casino could have on
8 House District 2 and Douglas County.

9 Building a casino in Medford will result
10 in a 25 percent loss in gaming revenue from Cow
11 Creek Tribe in my district. However, I would even
12 venture to say the losses could be much greater
13 than 25 percent, since many of the customers who
14 currently travel to Canyonville from Medford will
15 forego the travel expense and stay locally.

16 The Cow Creek Tribe is the second-largest
17 employer in Douglas County, and a loss of this
18 revenue will negatively impact many jobs that pay
19 living wages in our county. These jobs also
20 provide critical benefits, including health care,
21 sick leave and other benefits desperately needed in
22 our economy.

23 Approximately 90 percent of the employees
24 of Seven Feathers Casino and Resort are nontribal
25 residents of Douglas County.

1 Simply put, our county cannot afford this
2 economic hit. The results would be devastating.
3 These jobs contribute millions of dollars to our
4 state and local revenue to support local government
5 services.

6 As a sovereign government, the revenues
7 from Seven Feathers provide resources to support
8 essential government functions and services for
9 tribal members. This source of revenue relieves
10 reliance on County services as well as State
11 services and helps contribute to the partnership
12 with Douglas County in health care, emergency
13 services and their police intergovernmental
14 agreements.

15 According to a report from the Coquille
16 Tribe, 25 percent cut in revenue would take more
17 than 16 years to recover. This would be bad for
18 Oregon tribes and will greatly harm the quality of
19 life and economic development for the people of
20 Douglas County.

21 Thank you for considering my letter, and I
22 implore you to reject this application to build the
23 casino. This project would not be good for our
24 state or county. Thank you.

25 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

1 The next speaker is Kelly Huddleston.

2 MS. HUDDLESTON: Good evening. Can you
3 hear me?

4 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

5 MS. HUDDLESTON: My name is Kelly
6 Huddleston, and I serve as the business counsel for
7 the Umpqua Indian Development Corporation. That's
8 the economic development arm of the Cow Creek Band
9 of Umpqua.

10 I have divided my comments into three
11 parts: the personal, the professional and the
12 legal.

13 I am a member of the Cow Creek Band of
14 Umpqua Tribe and the very first tribal member to
15 obtain a law degree. I was only able to complete
16 my education because of the financial support of
17 the tribe, which then and now is supplied by gaming
18 revenues that are directed toward education and
19 other social service programs. This support has
20 not only positively impacted my life, but hundreds
21 of other tribal and community members in ways that
22 my mother and grandmother could only dream of.

23 Professionally, as the tribe's business
24 attorney, I can testify to the enormous challenges
25 of creating long-term economic stability for a

1 tribal government. Without a tax base or other
2 forms of stable funding, tribes compete in a risky
3 and often ruthless business environment to keep
4 their cultures alive and their people whole.
5 Sadly, sometimes the system pits tribes against one
6 another, and they find themselves competing to
7 sustain their economic health.

8 The proposed gaming facility we are
9 commenting on today creates exactly that type of
10 situation. The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua has and is
11 continually testing and trying out alternative
12 stable, long-term sources of revenue through its
13 businesses. However, the truth is that the Seven
14 Feathers Casino Resort is the tribe's primary
15 source of revenue. Any significant drop in that
16 revenue will damage the tribe, its people and the
17 municipalities that have come to rely on the cash
18 infusion that our casino brings in.

19 This brings me to our -- to my third
20 point: the law. The Secretary has wide latitude
21 and discretion on whether to allow this project to
22 go forward.

23 Please consider, Coquille Tribe already
24 has a successful casino on the coast. It wants to
25 place another in a service area over 150 miles away

1 from its reservation, which also happens to be a
2 service area of my tribe. Its operation of a
3 casino in Medford would pose an imminent and
4 quantifiable financial threat to the Cow Creek Band
5 of Umpqua Tribe.

6 Due to these facts, the Secretary should
7 analyze this request under the two-part
8 determination of IGRA. Otherwise, the Secretary
9 could allow Alternative 3, which is expansion of
10 the Mill site, as the least harmful, least adverse
11 action to all parties concerned.

12 Thank you for listening to my comments.

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

14 The next person to speak is Kevin Clark.
15 Kevin, please unmute yourself.

16 MR. CLARK: Hello. My name is Kevin
17 Clark, and I am a citizen.

18 And I am just voting in favor for it just
19 due to the socioeconomic impact that it's going to
20 have in Medford, Oregon, and the surrounding area.
21 There's not a lot of high-paying jobs there. And
22 this is going to bring a lot of good
23 worker-position jobs that are going to pay very
24 well, which is much needed to the local economy.

25 That's all I have, and I appreciate you

1 listening to me.

2 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

3 The next speaker is Tiffany Maple.

4 MS. MAPLE: Hi there. Can you hear me?

5 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

6 MS. MAPLE: Hi. I just wanted to say that
7 I am for the casino and Site A. I like the aspect
8 of the jobs that it would bring and the fact that
9 we wouldn't have to drive, you know, an hour and a
10 half to do any social events. I think that is a
11 big factor into my lifestyle.

12 That's really all I got. So thank you.

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

14 The next speaker is Mark Mattecheck.

15 MR. MATTECHECK: Thank you.

16 My name is Mark Mattecheck. I am the
17 owner of North Bend Lanes in North Bend, Oregon. I
18 am also the president of the Bowling Proprietors
19 Association for the state of Oregon.

20 I would like to talk -- comment about
21 being next to a casino and competing against them.
22 The tribe, when they moved here with their casino,
23 we were concerned about our operation. We are a
24 very large video poker retailer. And what we found
25 was the opposite of what we thought.

1 They did so many positive things in the
2 community that our revenue, instead of going down,
3 has increased every year since they've been here.
4 Our restaurant, which is only half a mile away, has
5 doubled in size. They have been a wonderful
6 partner to work with. They give us business and
7 refer us to groups that come into the town, and
8 they have changed our town into a really positive
9 place. They've been an economic driver.

10 As regards to the police service, the
11 tribe purchases police services from the City of
12 North Bend and helps fund officers that help the
13 whole city and actually reducing crime in our city,
14 not increasing it, just the opposite of what has
15 been commented.

16 The other thing that they have done in
17 this project is, as the president of the Bowling
18 Proprietors Association, they have saved a bowling
19 center that was going to go out of business. That
20 was a very busy bowling center there with lots of
21 traffic, and the association didn't want to lose
22 it. They took it over. They kept all the
23 employees. They gave them raises and benefits and
24 have breathed new life into a bowling center that
25 the community desperately needs.

1 With that, we have already assigned two
2 major tournaments to go to that bowling center and
3 visit the city. Those are in upwards of 200 or 300
4 people, based on our projections of those
5 tournaments.

6 Nothing that they've done in our town has
7 been negative as far as traffic flow or any of
8 those things as far as the tribe is considered.

9 So in parting, my last words, that they're
10 a good community event. They will help the City of
11 Medford. They will raise all the things in that
12 area with the events that they have, with the
13 combination of the golf, bowling and the motel.
14 It's a nice combination, and people will come
15 there. I think they'll lift all the other people
16 in that area to help out from an economic basis.

17 Thank you. That was -- that's all the
18 comments I have.

19 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

20 The next speaker is Joseph Giovannetti.

21 DR. GIOVANNETTI: Hello. Can you hear me?

22 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

23 DR. GIOVANNETTI: (Speaking tribal
24 language.) Hello. I am Dr. Joseph Giovannetti.
25 For the record, my last -- my surname is spelled

1 G-i-o-v as in "Victor," a-n-n-e-t-t-i.

2 I'm Tolowa. I am a descendant of Tolowa
3 Hereditary Headman Joseph Hostler. I am a
4 professor emeritus at Cal Poly Humboldt, where I
5 was chair of the Native American Studies program.
6 I am also a member of and councilman for the Tolowa
7 Dee-ni' Nation, located in Smith River, California.
8 In my field I am a recognized ethnohistorian and
9 published mythologist who has taught Native
10 American studies for many years.

11 I am speaking tonight to say unequivocally
12 that the Coquille Tribe has no ancestral claim to
13 the Rogue Valley. Coquille's claim is founded upon
14 two things: a service area created for them by the
15 federal government in the 1980s and their own greed
16 and desire to colonize the gaming market of other
17 tribes in order to stuff their own pockets.

18 There is nothing in history or law other
19 than the colonization of indigenous America by
20 Europeans that is similar to what Coquille is
21 attempting today. Their legal foundation for the
22 proposed action by the Department of the Interior
23 sits on the same racist underpinnings that the
24 doctrine of discovery does to justify the stealing
25 of North America: This is what we say the law is.

1 We need these resources. Give them these
2 resources. Give them to us because we say it's
3 right, and we are better than you.

4 The Department of the Interior needs to
5 consider the impacts that taking this Medford land
6 into trust will have on my tribe and others. For
7 tribes like Tolowa, Karuk, or Karuk, and Elk
8 Valley, it means a loss of services for our members
9 and loss of jobs in areas that cannot afford to
10 lose jobs.

11 Please stop Coquille's colonization
12 attempt.

13 Thank you.

14 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is Kyle
15 ViksneHill.

16 MR. VIKSNEHILL: Thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak in support of approving the
18 tribe's proposed project.

19 My name is Kyle ViksneHill, and I am a
20 member of the Coquille Indian Tribe. I am also the
21 chief financial officer of the Coquille tribal
22 government. I consider myself to be very fortunate
23 to have benefited from the education and employment
24 programs and services that the tribe has built
25 since we were restored in 1989 and to be able to

1 help my tribe continue the work of building and
2 sustaining those same programs for future
3 generations.

4 As the chief financial officer of the
5 tribal government, I have no involvement in the
6 tribe's economic development activities.

7 Unlike other tribes, the Coquille Tribe
8 does not distribute revenues to its tribal members
9 on a per-capita basis. This is explicitly
10 forbidden in the tribe's constitution.

11 Instead, the tribe uses its revenues to
12 provide for basic essential services: health care,
13 family and social services, costs of stewarding and
14 protecting our cultural and natural resources,
15 educating our children and taking care of our old
16 people.

17 Understanding the costs of these services
18 and how they are expected to change over time is a
19 large part of the work that I do as the chief
20 financial officer of the tribal government.

21 The tribe has recognized for a long time
22 that our current revenues are not enough to meet
23 these basic needs for our tribal members today.
24 The tribe also recognized for a long time that our
25 cost to provide these services will continue to

1 increase as the population of our tribe grows and
2 due to general inflationary increases at a rate
3 beyond the expected growth of our current revenues.

4 The tribe started its economic development
5 efforts in Medford over ten years ago, recognizing
6 that we need new sources of revenues not to enrich
7 ourselves, but to keep up with the growth in costs
8 and the growth of our tribal population and to make
9 a meaningful advance towards fully meeting the
10 needs of our tribal members for basic essential
11 services, not just the small portion of that need
12 that we are able to provide today.

13 I strongly encourage the BIA to approve
14 the Coquille Tribe's proposed project.

15 And thank you again for this opportunity
16 to provide comments.

17 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is George
18 Adams.

19 MS. ADAMS: Hi. My name is George Adams.
20 I represent DSAC, Disabled Senior Advisory
21 Committee.

22 I -- the people with a disability
23 throughout Southern Oregon here disapproves of this
24 plan because of two reasons.

25 Because within this plan, it hasn't been

1 proven to have 15 parking spaces for a person with
2 a disability with a van and lift, for them to park.
3 It is already difficult for a van to be parked in a
4 parking space with a lift because of not enough
5 parking spaces.

6 The other thing is, is that in this
7 place -- in this plan I did not see that the
8 buttons on the front doors to be presented, the
9 bathrooms to be set up with -- for people with all
10 types of disabilities, of blind, physical, mental
11 or otherwise.

12 The other thing, too, the reason that
13 is -- disapprove of is because of in this plan it
14 wasn't being presented that housing would be
15 allowed around this property once this thing is
16 built.

17 If the plan is to come back with a newer
18 plan to be placed with housing around this -- the
19 building being built and it can be proven that
20 parking spaces, up to 15 spaces, are going to be
21 made in front of your building, including the
22 specifications for a person with all types of
23 disabilities, from buttons on your doors to
24 widening of your bathrooms, so on and so forth, and
25 being treated as customers and consumers, if that

1 can be -- all be proven to be in this plan, then we
2 and the people of disability in the Southern Oregon
3 would be able to approve this plan.

4 But in order for it to happen, we hope
5 that this could be in this plan before it can be
6 approved by us as disabled people in Southern
7 Oregon.

8 Thank you.

9 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Scott Sullivan.

11 MR. SULLIVAN: (Speaking tribal language.)
12 My name is Scott Sullivan. I am the vice chairman
13 of the Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation.

14 The Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation is a sovereign,
15 federally-recognized Indian tribe. Our reservation
16 lands and tribal community are located
17 approximately 110 miles from the site of the
18 Coquille Indian Tribe's proposed gaming facility.

19 The National Environmental Policy Review
20 Act requires federal agencies to take a hard look
21 at the environmental consequences of their actions.
22 Significant adverse environmental effects must be
23 mitigated. The draft EIS fails this high standard.
24 The flaws in the draft are numerous.

25 In this short time allotted for public

1 comment, we wish to highlight the principal defect
2 that particularly concerns our nation. The adverse
3 socioeconomic effects of the Tolowa Dee-Ni' -- on
4 the Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation are severely
5 underestimated.

6 The nation depends on revenues from its
7 Lucky 7 gaming facility to fund critical
8 governmental and social welfare programs and
9 services for our citizens. We are largely
10 dependent on our gaming revenues to fund our
11 government. Any reduction in revenues from our
12 gaming facility will be felt across a wide range of
13 governmental services.

14 The draft does not reference or analyze
15 any demographic data for the community that is the
16 Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation. There is no gaming market
17 segment identified for the Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation
18 anywhere in the background or analysis.

19 The conclusion that the effects on our
20 gaming revenues will be small is based on
21 speculation that those effects will be diminished
22 over time because of population growth and
23 expanding economies at Tolowa. No factual support
24 for this speculation is provided, and there is
25 none.

1 In addition, what little information
2 included is out of date by at least three years.
3 As a result, it appears the drafters started with a
4 preconceived result in mind, that the project
5 should go forward, and constructed an analysis to
6 support that outcome. The draft is biased in favor
7 of the Coquille gaming project.

8 The BIA should withdraw the draft EIS and
9 completely redo the socioeconomic and other impact
10 portions.

11 (Speaking tribal language) for your
12 consideration of these comments.

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

14 The next speaker is a phone number, last
15 four digits 4552. Please unmute yourself by
16 pressing star 6.

17 MR. CORNETT: You can hear me?

18 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

19 MR. CORNETT: My name is Chris Cornett.
20 I'm an enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of
21 Oklahoma, and I'm Native American by blood.

22 I think this process has been flawed, that
23 the local native community that doesn't belong to
24 either the Cow Creek or the Coquille have ever been
25 considered, and there is no impact that's positive

1 for them. I believe that they've been
2 discriminated against and denied the chance to gain
3 wealth. They too are part of the makeup here.

4 And it is true that the Cow Creek and the
5 Coquille are not indigenous to this land; but there
6 are Native Americans here that were born here,
7 raised here and gained their cultural background
8 from these tribes and others that surround us. I
9 think that they need to be considered and need to
10 be weighed in on this process, and there needs to
11 be some kind of an action that lets them know that
12 they are part of it.

13 And thank you.

14 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

15 The next speaker is Alexandria Jones.

16 MS. JONES: Hi. Good evening, everyone.
17 Thank you for allowing public comments and allowing
18 me to speak.

19 My name is Alexandria Jones. I reside in
20 Phoenix, Oregon, just right down the road from the
21 proposed casino; and I'm also a member of the
22 Coquille Indian Tribe.

23 With the casino only being a little over
24 two acres, it is the perfect size of a facility to
25 house in Medford. By opening the facility, we are

1 able to turn the revenues into funds for our elders
2 and our educational benefits for tribal members.

3 Not only will the casino help our tribal
4 members, it will provide employment for local
5 community members as well. The Coquille Indian
6 Tribe is known for being an employer of choice by
7 providing 401(k)s, PTO and health care.

8 By having a casino, it will attract more
9 visitors to the Medford area, and in return give
10 more money to the area. My tribe has been known to
11 donate to Coos Bay. I see them doing this in
12 Medford as well.

13 The casino will be a positive impact to
14 the Jackson County area and to the community. It
15 will also help sustain my tribe for generations to
16 come.

17 Please consider doing your own research
18 before listening to things that have been
19 misconstrued by other tribes as well as other
20 tribal members.

21 Thank you for your time.

22 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

23 The next speaker is Nicole Keeton.

24 MS. KEETON: Hello. Can you guys hear me?

25 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

1 MS. KEETON: Okay. Perfect.

2 Let me find my notes real quick.

3 So my name is Nicole Keeton, and I am in
4 support of this proposal and it bringing more jobs
5 for our community as well as adding a local option
6 versus traveling over the summits that become very
7 dangerous during some adverse weather conditions
8 during the winter. I also believe that it will
9 help with our economic development in our
10 community.

11 And after hearing all of the supporting
12 comments, it has given me even more insight on the
13 positive effects that this will have on our
14 community.

15 And that's all that I have for you.

16 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

17 The next speaker is Chris Gerschler.

18 MR. GERSCHLER: Hello. Can you hear me
19 okay?

20 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

21 MR. GERSCHLER: Okay.

22 I would like to say it's a positive, and
23 I'm speaking that I would like this project to go
24 ahead.

25 Where it's going to be put in, in Medford,

1 I like seeing stuff being replaced with new items
2 and new venues for Medford, Oregon. I have lived
3 here at my address for 35 years. I've always
4 thought that Medford has such potential to
5 entertain and also needs well-paying jobs.

6 My vote is yes. I'd be happy to see the
7 casino here.

8 Thank you.

9 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

10 The next speaker is Jeff Jensen. Please
11 unmute yourself. Speaker Jeff Jensen.

12 MR. JENSEN: Hi. My name's Jeffrey
13 Jensen. I'm a local resident in Medford, and I am
14 speaking on behalf of being in favor of this
15 project.

16 I see the economic development aspects of
17 not only the product -- projects that they've
18 implemented so far, but what they're talking about
19 as far as having the Class II section gaming would
20 be a great benefit to our community.

21 The fact that they're willing to pay for
22 additional services that include additional fire,
23 police and other City services as well as buy local
24 as much as possible in the plan that I read through
25 shows me that they're going to make an increased

1 positive impact to a number of small businesses in
2 the community, which is in turn going to create
3 more wealth in the community as those small
4 businesses look for additional services, including,
5 you know, marketing or as they're spending more
6 money at our auto dealers and various places that
7 they're going to be putting their money back into.

8 The distance between this casino and any
9 other casinos seems like the relevance of that
10 should not be taken into consideration, only due to
11 the fact that the Medford -- City of Medford and
12 the chamber of commerce here is looking to build a
13 lot more in the sports and entertainment sector
14 here.

15 And every time that I have seen, you know,
16 people looking to go to Seven Feathers, a lot of
17 that traffic would also be pulled from counties
18 north of here, such as Eugene, you know, and
19 further into Douglas County or other areas, people
20 stopping along the I-5. So I think some people
21 might be overestimating what the revenue impacts
22 could be in this project to their existing
23 business.

24 And if they really have 200 million in
25 assets right now, including other businesses and

1 other things that they are developing as projects
2 that generate revenue, it seems like they probably
3 have the funds to invest in enough other projects
4 to further their revenue goals and make up for any
5 difference in shortfall from the casino.

6 Further, their entertainment venue that
7 they have offers a diverse set of entertainment --
8 entertainers that do not conflict with what we have
9 brought to the valley, either at the Jackson County
10 Expo, Britt, or other areas, right? They do a very
11 good job of having specialized entertainment and
12 things that are at their casino that are not
13 available down here, which is part of the draw for
14 people from our community to go up there and stay
15 there.

16 So in summary, I would be for this
17 project. I do not see the same negative
18 consequences that others are kind of proposing at
19 this point.

20 And as a Native American studies
21 certificate graduate of SOU, I did an entire thesis
22 paper on the impacts of the casino industries and
23 how they play into one another and create a
24 positive impact for the community in places that
25 they do, so...

1 THE MODERATOR: Okay. If you could wrap
2 up your comments.

3 MR. JENSEN: That's it. Thanks.

4 THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Simon Johnson.

6 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you for allowing me to
7 speak.

8 My name is Simon Johnson. Being a
9 resident of Medford, Oregon for over 30 years and
10 speaking on behalf of Ethos Academy located in
11 Phoenix, we are in favor of the approval of this
12 project.

13 There are many benefits to this project
14 moving forward, such as many more jobs will be
15 created, as the EIS suggests that the construction
16 will create up to 78 jobs in the short term and
17 more in the future, and will bring in more tourism.

18 Medford is growing and has the
19 infrastructure, especially in South Medford, to
20 support this project.

21 The increased traffic will bring in an
22 influx of additional revenue, not only for the
23 project, but for the other businesses in the area.
24 Also, seeing that the area gets a facelift will be
25 great.

1 So on behalf of Ethos Academy, that has
2 helped stimulate Phoenix after the fires, this
3 small casino will greatly increase the overall
4 impact of Medford, Phoenix, and the surrounding
5 areas. We would like to see this project be
6 approved and move forward.

7 Thank you.

8 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

9 The next speaker is Holly Michaels.

10 Holly, there appears to be an issue with
11 your Zoom. Please call the help line at
12 (949) 861-5954.

13 The next speaker is Yamire Hanze.

14 MR. HANZE: Hello. Hi. Good evening,
15 everyone. Can you --

16 THE MODERATOR: Hello.

17 MR. HANZE: Hi. Hello?

18 THE MODERATOR: Hello. Please go ahead.

19 MR. HANZE: Oh, right. Yes. So I -- my
20 name is Yamire. My last name is Hanze. I am newly
21 employed at the Compass Hotel.

22 And all I see is positive things and
23 exciting things to happen here down in Medford. I
24 obviously see the new employment, the -- just the
25 creation of jobs happening. I get to see all the

1 people from all sorts of places come in. And I can
2 only imagine with the new projects more people
3 wanting to visit our town.

4 And I'm definitely for it. I can see only
5 positive things. I think Medford working with the
6 Coquille Tribe is doing an amazing, I mean,
7 collaboration, and hopefully we can continue to.
8 And yeah, I think I'm for it, and I -- I see
9 nothing but good things happening.

10 And that's all that I have to say.

11 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

12 MR. HANZE: Thank you. Have a good night.

13 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is
14 Jessica Gomez. Please unmute yourself.

15 MS. GOMEZ: Yes. Hello. Thank you for
16 having me.

17 I'd like to speak in support of this
18 project. I live about ten minutes from that, maybe
19 even less than that from the site. And I can tell
20 you that that area of Medford really is in need of
21 investment. It's great for our growing community.

22 We have many things that have been
23 improved over the last several years in Medford;
24 and this is, I think, one more great amenity for
25 people. There's a whole sports center that's very

1 close to that where we're really trying to promote
2 people coming in and bringing their kids to compete
3 in sports events here. Having an additional hotel
4 that's close to that area and then amenities that
5 go along with that hotel is a really positive
6 thing.

7 I would also like to say that the Coquille
8 Tribe has been, I mean, really fantastic community
9 members. They have been great partners for years
10 and years. They've been dedicated to this project
11 for the last ten years. And I think it's time to
12 see this move forward.

13 The -- I have heard through these comments
14 today and at the last period that, you know, many
15 people are coming to the table with this mindset of
16 scarcity, that it's going to somehow take away from
17 another tribe. And I would really like to
18 encourage people to think more broadly about what
19 this means for the community in Medford, what it
20 means for Southern Oregon.

21 There are many people that don't have
22 access to get to that other casino. There are many
23 people who visit our region that want that kind of
24 amenity. And for a growing community, it's really,
25 really important to have that offering.

1 So thank you for hearing me. Again, I'd
2 like to see this project move forward.

3 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

4 The next commenter is Michael Mason.
5 Please unmute yourself. Again, the next speaker is
6 Michael Mason.

7 Michael, if you're having technical
8 difficulties, please call the help line on the
9 slide.

10 The next speaker is Stephen Beckham.

11 MR. MASON: Oh. This is Michael Mason.
12 Can you hear me at this point?

13 THE MODERATOR: Oh, yes.

14 MR. MASON: Sorry about that. I was
15 confused about what to unmute, which will be
16 explained momentarily.

17 But I'm Michael Mason. I'm an attorney in
18 Portland, Oregon.

19 Thank you very much for the opportunity to
20 testify.

21 I wish to express my support for the
22 fee-to-trust acquisition in Medford of this small
23 parcel, but fee-to-trust acquisition for Class II
24 gaming.

25 From 1986 through 1989, as an attorney at

1 the Native American Program of Oregon Legal
2 Services, I had the honor of representing the
3 Coquille Tribe in its federal restoration efforts,
4 culminating in passage of the Coquille Restoration
5 Act, Public Law 101-42. I jumped at the chance to
6 work on this in 1986 because of being a
7 Northwesterner and understanding the great
8 injustice that had been done to all the terminated
9 tribes here, something that was not known to many
10 people. Fortunately, we have a lot more awareness
11 of it today.

12 During the effort on the bill, early in
13 the effort, the tribe contracted for a
14 socioeconomic study of its membership. That
15 revealed a couple of things: one, that about 10
16 percent of the members were in Jackson County, the
17 tribal members.

18 It also revealed great unemployment and
19 underemployment among the members, as low as any
20 segment of our population in Oregon at that time.
21 That was a startling thing to see. We knew there
22 were problems and that termination had been
23 disastrous, but we didn't realize that it had
24 plunged people to such depths.

25 So the bill was introduced in the 100th

1 Congress, the same Congress that passed the Indian
2 Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988.

3 We had the, you know, five-county service
4 area. We ended up with a five-county service area
5 largely based on that socioeconomic study and on
6 the importance of economic development in areas
7 where people -- where tribal members were in such
8 dire straits. That service area was negotiated
9 with Congressman DeFazio, of course, the sponsor of
10 the bill. Jackson County was, again, important
11 because of its -- partly because of its 10 percent
12 membership residing there.

13 So we discussed in our meetings with
14 Congressman DeFazio -- and I was in all of the
15 meetings with the congressional delegation, the
16 Oregon congressional delegation, with Congressman
17 DeFazio; Senator Mark O. Hatfield, who led the
18 effort in the Senate when it -- the bill moved over
19 there; Senator Packwood; Congressman AuCoin;
20 Congressman Denny Smith.

21 All of the conversations included a
22 discussion of the importance of tribal economic
23 development in all of the service area counties
24 potentially. Certainly Medford, Lane and Coos were
25 focused on. So --

1 THE MODERATOR: Can you please conclude
2 your comments? Your three minutes are up.

3 MR. MASON: Oh, my goodness. Okay. Time
4 flies.

5 But I just wanted to say that at no time
6 during those discussions was there any mention of
7 any limits on economic development. Everything was
8 on the table, and that was very important.

9 So I -- again, I appreciate the
10 opportunity. Thank you. And I hope that this
11 project can be allowed to go forward.

12 Have a good night.

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

14 The next speaker is Russell Attebery.
15 Please unmute yourself.

16 MR. ATTEBERY: Can you hear me?

17 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

18 MR. ATTEBERY: Yes.

19 Thank you for the time, and good evening.

20 My name is Russell "Buster" Attebery; and
21 I serve as chairman of the Karuk Tribe,
22 second-largest federally-recognized Indian tribe in
23 California.

24 I speak with you today to provide the
25 Karuk Tribe's initial comments on the draft

1 environmental impact statement and fee-to-trust
2 application before you and state clearly that the
3 Karuk Tribe objects to this action for both
4 governmental and environmental reasons.

5 Contrary to the comments you heard
6 earlier, approval of this proposed application
7 would absolutely decimate the Karuk Tribe's ability
8 to fulfill its obligations to its people.

9 The Karuk Tribe is headquartered at Happy
10 Camp, in an extremely remote area of Northern
11 California, and has only a small tribal trust land
12 base. The Karuk Tribe has over 3700 members, and
13 the tribal government is charged with providing
14 these members with essential services and
15 protecting their general welfare.

16 The tribe had no feasible opportunity to
17 benefit under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act
18 until the tribe was able to acquire and convey into
19 trust for gaming a small parcel of land near Yreka,
20 California, within the tribe's traditional
21 territory and close to Interstate 5 a few miles
22 south of the California-Oregon border, just down
23 the road from this proposed project before you.

24 My comments tonight are focused only on a
25 few key issues; however, our concerns regarding

1 this application run deep; and these comments will
2 be supplemented with additional written comments.

3 First, the department has thus far failed
4 to consider all of the tribal communities impacted
5 by this decision, including the Karuk Tribe.

6 The Karuk Tribe has previously requested
7 pursuant to 25 CFR Part 292.2 that the Bureau of
8 Indian Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of
9 Indian Affairs, as the Karuk Tribe's trustee,
10 consult with the Karuk Tribe concerning the
11 proposed acquisition. However, we have not yet
12 received a response to this request.

13 The department's trust and consultation
14 obligations are not limited to the applicant tribe,
15 and it is not limited by state boundaries. Its
16 obligations are owed to all federally-recognized
17 tribes and in this instance the tribal communities
18 that will be disrupted by the proposed project.

19 Only in consultation would the Karuk Tribe
20 be able to share detailed, confidential information
21 about the likely extent to which approval of either
22 Alternative A or B in the EIS would be adversely --
23 would adversely impact the Karuk Tribe's ability
24 and resources to meet the current and future needs
25 of its citizens and government for the next three

1 decades and the extent to which the lives of the
2 Karuk citizens would be impacted.

3 Second, the scope of your analysis is too
4 narrow and out of date. The scoping for the
5 analysis of impacts from this project occurred
6 eight years ago and never resulted in a final
7 document.

8 That 2015 scoping process could not and
9 did not consider significantly changed
10 circumstances to the region since 2015, including
11 the 2018 opening of our Rain Rock Casino less than
12 an hour away, the region's wildfires, the threat of
13 future wildfires, as well as the impacts of the
14 COVID-19 pandemic. All of these items have
15 significantly altered the demographics and
16 economics of the region, raising border impacts
17 concerns and environmental justice concerns not
18 present during the 2015 scoping process.

19 The department is obligated to take a hard
20 look at all the impacts that would occur as a
21 result of its discretionary decision. Under
22 current scope of analysis --

23 THE MODERATOR: Mr. Attebery?

24 MR. ATTEBERY: Yes.

25 THE MODERATOR: Could you please conclude

1 your comments?

2 MR. ATTEBERY: I will. With all due
3 respect, I'll ask that you hear me out. I do know
4 that the Coquille chairwoman was allotted a lot
5 more time than the three minutes. I will finish as
6 quickly as I can.

7 We urge the department to pause its
8 analysis and conduct a renewed scoping report to
9 more appropriately guide the NEPA review. Only
10 then should a draft EIS be circulated for public
11 comment.

12 Third, when this project was previously
13 proposed, the department determined that it was
14 unable to approve the application for an abundance
15 of reasons, including the Coquille Tribe had not
16 made a convincing case that the project provided
17 needed benefits to the Coquille Tribe and that the
18 meager benefits did not outweigh the significant
19 impacts to surrounding jurisdictions, the
20 disruption of the well-established balance of
21 number of casinos in Oregon and the potential for
22 expansion of gaming against the wishes of the State
23 and its elected officials.

24 These concerns have increased since that
25 time, and the impacts to jurisdiction must include

1 impacts to regional tribes, like Karuk;
2 municipalities, including the City and County of
3 Yreka, which benefit from service agreements with
4 our people; and the socioeconomic impacts of these
5 and other communities.

6 The proposed project will only take jobs
7 and income from others in the region. This
8 project, if permitted to move forward as proposed,
9 will hamstring the Karuk Tribe's ability to provide
10 programs and services to our members, to protect
11 the public safety and general welfare of our
12 members, and to main infrastructure.

13 In short, this project's approval will
14 interfere with the Karuk Tribe's sovereignty by
15 impeding our ability to self-govern in a way we
16 have determined will best serve our members and
17 local community.

18 Moreover, the specter of this project
19 being approved in the future creates a real and
20 present danger for our planning and governing
21 capabilities.

22 I urge the department to do as it
23 previously did in 2020 and decline to accept the
24 Medford land into trust and remove this cloud over
25 our community. You have ample basis for this

1 determination without the cost of labor of an
2 environmental impact statement.

3 I urge that you do not close your eyes to
4 the Karuk and regional people that will be impacted
5 by your decision. These impacts will only be seen
6 and considered by pausing your current process and
7 increasing the scope of analysis by conducting a
8 new, proper scoping period.

9 Thank you for your time and consideration.

10 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

11 The next speaker is Stephen Beckham.

12 MR. BECKHAM: My name is Stephen Dow
13 Beckham.

14 I have worked on fee-to-trust land
15 determinations in Oregon, Washington, California,
16 Oklahoma, Illinois, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and
17 Arkansas; and never have I seen a case of more
18 blatant, glaring reservation-shopping than the
19 proposal of the Coquille Tribe to reach 168 miles
20 from North Bend, Oregon into the treaty cession
21 area of the Rogue River tribes to try to justify a
22 second casino and entertainment venue.

23 This strikes me as wrongheaded.

24 Chairman Meade and tribal member Barton
25 both deplored termination; yet if one looks at the

1 history of the Coquille Tribe, the tribal council
2 endorsed termination in the 1950s as part of its
3 effort to receive its distribution of a land claims
4 case. The Karuk, Cow Creek, Tolowa and other
5 tribes who are affected by this proposal did not
6 endorse termination in the 1950s.

7 It's very important that beyond the EIS,
8 that the Department of the Interior consider the
9 ramifications of the Coquille Restoration Act of
10 June 28, 1989. That law gave the Secretary of
11 Interior discretion to take land into trust. But
12 that law did not in any way amend or contravene the
13 clause in IGRA, passed the previous October, 1988,
14 that defined how a restored tribe can gain
15 rescored -- restored lands for the purpose of
16 gaming.

17 The Interior Department cannot restore
18 something that never existed. The Coquille Tribe
19 was not an aboriginal tribe in the Rogue River
20 Valley. It lived over on the coast of Oregon.

21 This project will have deleterious impacts
22 on neighboring tribes. I worked on the
23 fee-to-trust determination for Cow Creek between
24 1984 and '86. I was the ethnohistorian for the
25 Karuk Tribe on the Rain Rock Casino project in

1 Yreka, California. This impact or the impacts of
2 the Coquille casino will undermine the delivery of
3 services to the Karuk, the Klamath, the Tolowa, the
4 Smith River and the Cow Creek peoples; all so that
5 another tribe from North Bend, Oregon can have a
6 second casino and hotel. This is wrongheaded.

7 I oppose the Propositions or Options A and
8 B that are enumerated in this EIS.

9 Thank you.

10 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

11 The next speaker is Barbara Duey. Barbara
12 Duey, please unmute yourself.

13 Barbara Duey, if you're having technical
14 difficulties, please call the number on the
15 screen -- oh.

16 MR. DUEY: Do you get me here?

17 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

18 MR. DUEY: Okay.

19 This is Lance Duey.

20 I'm in favor of the Proposition A there.

21 I think the economic impact would be very good. I
22 know -- we live over on the coast, and we have a
23 couple casinos over here. And all the help they've
24 done to the town, the roads, the special activity
25 they've done have helped tremendously. So I

1 believe it'd be a good thing for it.

2 That's all. Thank you.

3 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

4 The next speaker is Bob Khos. Please
5 unmute yourself.

6 MR. KHOS: Hello. This is Bob Khos.

7 THE MODERATOR: Hello. Please provide
8 your comments.

9 MR. KHOS: Thank you.

10 I want to comment that I'm for the
11 proposal for the Coquille Tribe and its impact, its
12 positive impact that it will have on the economics
13 for Jackson County and the Medford region.

14 The area, as you know, is strife when it
15 comes to jobs for -- that pay consistently and are
16 available at a higher pay rate. And I think that
17 there's a great impact in terms of what it will
18 bring in to the region that's growing year over
19 year and its future with its expansion in terms of
20 what features and options it provides to the
21 citizens.

22 So I'm, again, for the proposal and hope
23 to see it come through. I -- and I've been in
24 Oregon since 1991 and excited to see this growth
25 opportunity.

1 Thank you.

2 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is Holly
3 Michaels.

4 MS. MICHAELS: Good evening. Are you able
5 to hear me?

6 THE MODERATOR: Yes, we are.

7 MS. MICHAELS: Wonderful. Thank you.

8 My name is Holly Michaels, and I am the
9 director of operations for Representative Christine
10 Goodwin of House District 4. And I am going to be
11 reading a letter on her behalf that she wrote and
12 wanted to have shared this evening.

13 "I am writing in the position as Oregon
14 State Representative for House District 4, which
15 covers the southern region of Oregon, from
16 Canyonville to Central Point, in opposition to the
17 off-reservation casino that the Coquille Tribe is
18 attempting to establish in the City of Medford.

19 "The draft environmental impact statement
20 open for comment exposes how this casino would
21 benefit only one tribe, the Coquille, to the
22 detriment of other tribes in the Pacific Northwest.
23 The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians would
24 lose at least 25 percent of its revenue from
25 gaming, which is a conservative estimate, and could

1 be nearly twice that.

2 "The Cow Creek Tribe is a leading employer
3 in Douglas County, creating jobs for primary
4 nontribal residents in the region. They pay living
5 wages with benefits in a rural part of our state
6 that cannot afford to lose jobs. A 25 percent cut
7 or more in revenues would result in job losses and
8 lost revenues critical for tribal government
9 services, putting more demand on local government
10 services.

11 "The Cow Creek Tribe is also a strong
12 partner with our community. For example, the
13 tribal police department works in a
14 government-to-government relationship to not only
15 respond to public-safety issues on tribal land, but
16 to fund two full-time positions with our sheriff's
17 department and also provide added capacity for
18 emergency response throughout the county, which is
19 desperately needed.

20 "During the pandemic, the tribe provided
21 PPE when hospitals needed it. In addition, they
22 have donated millions over the last decade to
23 support nonprofits fighting food insecurity,
24 education and housing needs. The tribe also helped
25 fund a wing at Asante to expand access to critical

1 behavioral-health care our region needs.

2 "All of this is at stake, and much more,
3 if this project is approved.

4 "Contrary to what the project proponents
5 suggest, this issue is about something other than
6 the competition in the market. Oregon has been
7 deliberate in its policies to balance governmental
8 gambling as a means to generate revenue for either
9 tribal governments or State government. Tribes are
10 permitted to have a casino on their reservation as
11 regulated by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and
12 in compact with the State of Oregon. The State
13 lottery is the other form of gaming permitted.

14 "However, if the BIA approves this project
15 through the restored lands exemption, this would be
16 the first off-reservation casino in Oregon. It
17 would set a precedent for Coquille to purchase
18 private lands with no ancestral ties into trust in
19 their five-county service areas and sprinkle large
20 and small casinos across Oregon.

21 "Furthermore, this project does not
22 require a compact, which means zero oversight or
23 accountability for local and State government.

24 "Please take all of these concerns into
25 consideration.

1 "The path is the wrong path for Oregon.
2 It would unhinge our balance of gambling and open
3 the door to massive casino and gambling expansion
4 that our state doesn't want or need. This decision
5 should be the decision of State and local elected
6 officials.

7 "Please reject this application under the
8 restored lands exemption and understand the
9 negative statewide social and economic impact this
10 project would have, benefiting one tribe at the
11 expense of many others.

12 "Sincerely,

13 "Representative Christine Goodwin."

14 Thank you for allowing me to share that on
15 her behalf tonight.

16 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

17 The next speaker is Michael Brady.

18 MR. BRADY: Hi. My name's Mike Brady.
19 I've been a resident of the Rogue Valley for the
20 past -- about ten years now.

21 I'm supporting the Coquille Tribe's
22 efforts to place a Class II gaming license in the
23 existing Roxy Ann Lanes.

24 You know, my understanding is the Coquille
25 Tribe allocates all their revenue towards services

1 for their tribal members, you know, short of what's
2 donated to charitable organizations. They've been
3 as active as any giving group in this community
4 since I've lived here.

5 And truthfully, it sounds like people are
6 making this casino thing sound out to be a very,
7 very large property. And if you look at the plans,
8 it's the same footprint that the Roxy Ann Lanes
9 already owns. And the Roxy Ann Lanes will still be
10 there. So, you know, the reality is it's --
11 doesn't look like it's that big of a property, yet
12 it's going to generate quite a bit of opportunity
13 for, you know, those of us that live here in the
14 Rogue Valley.

15 You know, I saw the amount of jobs it's
16 expected to create, both directly and indirectly,
17 and good jobs, too, ones with benefits and 401(k)s.
18 And if you spend any time down here, I think you'd
19 all agree that we're -- we could use those.

20 So, you know, if the tribe is -- indeed
21 they're in their legal right to develop that
22 property out and it would accomplish their goals
23 of, you know, getting toward self-sufficiency,
24 then, you know, I don't see a reason why this
25 project isn't approved.

1 So thank you. I appreciate you letting me
2 speak my mind here.

3 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

4 The next speaker is Jen Procter Andrews.

5 MS. PROCTER ANDREWS: (Speaking tribal
6 language.) Hello, friends and cousins. My name is
7 Jen Procter Andrews. I'm a Coquille Indian person.
8 My relatives are the Mecum family. My Mecum family
9 lives in Roseburg along the Umpqua River. I'm a
10 tribal council representative for the Coquille
11 Tribe, and I'm in favor of upholding the law and
12 moving this application forward.

13 I've been an Oregonian all my life. My
14 ancestors were Oregonians for millennia before
15 anybody else laid claim to our lands, the territory
16 that would become Oregon. My family are
17 Oregonians, and my child's an Oregonian. My son is
18 growing up knowing that his roots are right here
19 today in our lands in what we call Oregon; and we
20 will always be here, my tribe and my family.

21 Despite the unratified treaties, the
22 Indian agents, the diseases, the wars, the boarding
23 schools, termination, the allotments and the
24 payoffs, we're still here. We're here as a
25 sovereign nation, people who have been here since

1 time immemorial; and we plan to be here for
2 centuries to come.

3 We're creating jobs, managing our lands,
4 our forests, caring for our waters and our fish,
5 who are family to us, just as our ancestors managed
6 Oregon lands for millennia before Oregon or Jackson
7 County was even a concept.

8 We've heard many mythologies and opinions
9 tonight, terms like "greed" and "colonize" and
10 "reservation-shopping," which is dramatic. People
11 who cannot pronounce our name are talking about our
12 right to reservation lands. But none of that
13 applies here, because this is an environmental
14 impact hearing.

15 The real environmental impact is the
16 Coquille Tribe provides for our people and
17 communities. Our number-one core value is
18 promoting the health and well-being of tribal
19 members and our community. We take much of the
20 burden off the County and State by providing health
21 care, education, job training, and other critical
22 social services to our people, other Native
23 American and Alaska Natives and the greater
24 community, creating a support network where others
25 have failed. We care for our lands, our water and

1 our communities in which we live and do business.
2 This is what the Coquille people do.

3 Follow the law, look at the facts. And
4 thank you.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

6 At this time, there are no additional
7 hands raised. If you would like to make a
8 statement, please raise your hand by pressing the
9 hand icon in the lower right-hand of your screen or
10 star 9 if you are joining by phone.

11 This includes anybody who has already
12 spoken and would like additional time to speak.
13 Please raise your hand.

14 At this time I would like to ask phone
15 number 4552.

16 MR. CORNETT: Yes. Can you hear me?

17 THE MODERATOR: Yes. You have an
18 additional three minutes.

19 MR. CORNETT: Thank you.

20 I'm Chris Cornett, an enrolled member of
21 the Choctaw Nation, Oklahoma.

22 I've lived here 69 years, and I don't
23 understand why there's no recognition for the
24 natives that have been born here and
25 have historical roots here are never in the

1 equation. I believe the processes to be failed and
2 the environmental impact statement just to be
3 irrelative.

4 Thank you.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

6 Next speaker, Chairman Brenda Meade. You
7 have an additional three minutes.

8 MS. MEADE: Thank you.

9 Again, this is Brenda Meade, chairman for
10 the Coquille Tribe.

11 And I just want to take a moment to say
12 thank you to everyone for your time tonight, for
13 giving comments and participating in this public
14 hearing.

15 We want everyone to know that we are
16 listening to all the comments that are being made
17 to understand the fears that we hear from other
18 tribes. But the truth is we all must grow and to
19 take care of our people as a sovereign nation.

20 And we look to the BIA and the Department
21 of Interior to uphold the promises made to us by
22 Congress and to follow the laws, because the truth
23 is we have the right to place land into trust. And
24 we look forward to our next steps in this process.

25 Thank you.

1 THE MODERATOR: The next speaker is
2 Alexandria Jones.

3 MR. FLORES: Hello. My name's Jose
4 Flores. I've lived in Phoenix, Oregon and was born
5 here.

6 I support the Coquille Tribe and would
7 like the casino to boost employment and
8 sustainability for the Native American tribe.

9 Thank you.

10 THE MODERATOR: Next speaker is Wayne
11 Shammel.

12 MR. SHAMMEL: Yes. Thank you for the
13 time.

14 I'm curious if there has been any analysis
15 of treaty-line delineations or treaty-right
16 boundaries in the area covered by the environmental
17 study.

18 THE MODERATOR: Mr. Shammel, this is an
19 opportunity to provide comment. Your comments and
20 questions will be responded to in the final EIS.

21 MR. SHAMMEL: Thank you very much.

22 THE MODERATOR: If there is any additional
23 people who would like to speak, who would like an
24 additional three minutes, please raise your hand
25 now. If you're on a phone, you can raise your hand

1 by pressing star 9.

2 Thank you, everyone who joined the hearing
3 tonight. We appreciate your comments. We'll now
4 be ending the public hearing. Good night.

5 (Whereupon the proceedings were
6 concluded at 8:07 p.m.)

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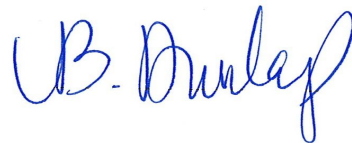
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Dated: March 8, 2023



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