



November 23, 2005

Dear Friend:

You may already have heard that the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) released an opinion this morning stating that the land at the Interstate 5-La Center junction, where the Cowlitz Tribe wants to put a casino, qualifies as “restored lands.”

This is a disappointment. The Cowlitz Tribe submitted this application to the NIGC in March with no public notice, and the NIGC never requested public input. We only confirmed the existence of the restored-lands application in October and then quickly submitted materials supporting our position that the lands at the La Center junction are outside the tribe’s aboriginal homeland, which has been adjudicated by the Indian Claims Commission and supported by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. From the looks of the NIGC’s opinion, with its heavy weighting of the Cowlitz Tribe’s materials, the opinion could have been written last summer, before we even knew that the tribe had applied for this status.

What the opinion does is give the tribe a way around the federal law that requires the Secretary of the Interior to consult with state and local officials to determine whether gaming would be detrimental to the area if lands were taken into trust for a casino.

However, we regard this decision as a just a bump in the road to stopping the casino. The NIGC opinion is one step in an ongoing process, and although the decision did not go as we had hoped, this does not mean that the proposed casino-resort is imminent. Before the Cowlitz Tribe can operate a casino at the La Center junction, the land there must be taken into trust by the Department of the Interior. And before that, the Bureau of Indian Affairs must conduct a hearing and take public comment on an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

We expect the draft EIS to be released around the end of 2005. Given the statements that already have come out of it, we have no illusions that it will be an unbiased report. But it will provide an opportunity for concerned citizens to present their views on this project.

For our part, CARS is exploring what avenues are available for overcoming this setback. We thank each of you for your efforts to make an impact on this process. And we hope we can depend on your continued support in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Ed Lynch, Chairman