

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



BRIAN BAIRD
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
3RD DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

May 30, 2007

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Mr. James Cason
Associate Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Cason:

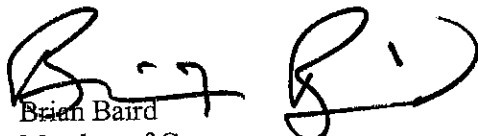
I am writing with regard to the Environmental Impact Statement for the Cowlitz Tribe's proposed casino in Southwest Washington State.

As you may be aware, there are growing concerns among some members of the Southwest Washington community that they have not been allowed to comment on the business plan included in the Cowlitz Tribe's preliminary final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). They feel that the business plan contains information that is critical to determining the Tribe's unmet needs and to assessing its proposal to build a casino. Furthermore, there have been claims that the business plan is a required part of the EIS process. At this point in time, my office has been unable to ascertain whether the business plan is in fact required, and if so, whether the community is entitled to a public comment period.

I have advocated to make this process as fair and open as possible. I can understand the concerns of some members of the community and appreciate their desire to thoroughly evaluate all elements of the application before a final decision on the Cowlitz Tribe's application is made. Insofar as the law allows, I urge the Bureau of Indian Affairs to consider releasing the business plan for public review and allowing a public comment period of 30 days.

I look forward to your prompt decision on this matter. You can reach me by telephone at (202) 225-3536, or via facsimile at (202) 225-3478.

Sincerely,


Brian Baird
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. George Skibine, Acting Deputy Secretary for Indian Affairs
Mr. Stanley Speaks, Regional Director, BIA Northwest Regional Office