



Cowlitz Indian Tribe

Cowlitz Tribe Seeks Improved Means of Protection for Clark County

Tribe is undeterred by legal wrangling bought by out-of-state interests

Vancouver, WA. – October 5, 2007 – The following statement can be attributed to Phil Harju, Cowlitz Tribal Spokesman and member of the Cowlitz Tribal Council:

“The Cowlitz Tribe is continuing the ongoing process to establish our reservation within our traditional territory and develop a casino resort that will provide thousands of jobs and strengthen Clark County’s economy. Part of this process was to develop a memorandum of understanding with Clark County that ensured that environmental, health and safety protections were in place. Local card rooms have attacked this tribal-Clark County MOU. The Cowlitz Tribe has been developing an effective alternative mechanism to ensure that the same environment, health and safety protections provided in the MOU will be implemented and will be enforceable.

“Over the last several months we have continued to refine and strengthen the alternative mechanism that we first introduced earlier this summer. Because a stronger alternative has resulted from this effort, today we are withdrawing from consideration the earlier version that was submitted to the National Indian Gaming Commission. This will allow us to submit the newly refined and strengthened version.

“This new version squarely addresses issues that have been raised by the local community over the last several months, and underscores our commitment to being a good neighbor and partner to Clark County.

“Since we were recognized by the federal government in 2000 we have been working toward the promise of educational opportunity, health care benefits and self-sufficiency for our Tribe. Unlike any other recognized tribe in the State of Washington, our Tribe continues to be forced to function without a reservation of our own. This is a substantial hardship for our Tribe. It also prevents us from providing thousands of jobs and economic opportunity for our neighbors in the local community. Wealthy business interests, the Grand Ronde Tribe of Oregon and the

LaCenter card rooms are spending millions of dollars to create bureaucratic and litigation roadblocks for the Cowlitz Tribe and the people of Clark County. But we remain committed to the obligations we accepted in our Memorandum of Understanding with Clark County, and we remain committed to bringing thousands of jobs and economic opportunity to Clark County.

We are very much looking forward to the day when the jobs our project will provide will help strengthen our local economy and provide employment for thousands of area residents who want a job with good pay and benefits. The Cowlitz Tribe is committed to working with local residents and neighbors to create an amenity of which we can all be proud.”

CONTACT: Phil Harju
(360) 791-8181