



# Cowlitz Indian Tribe

**For Immediate Release:**

April 21, 2005

**For Additional Information:**

Cowlitz Indian Tribe – 360-577-8140

Dave Barnett – 206-276-4755

## **Washington State Senate adopts resolution supporting Cowlitz Tribe efforts to establish initial reservation**

Vancouver, WA – The Washington State Senate adopted a resolution on April 20 supporting the Cowlitz Indian Tribe's "fee-to-trust" application to establish a reservation in southwest Washington. Senate Resolution 8682 recognizes the Cowlitz Tribe's long history in the region and its efforts through much of the 20th century to achieve formal acknowledgement as a federally recognized tribe. The resolution encourages the federal government "to expeditiously restore lands and opportunities to the Cowlitz People to maximize their economic and cultural development and well-being."

"We are very grateful to the Washington State Senate for its generous support of the Cowlitz Tribe," said Tribal Chairman John Barnett. "This is a very important day in the long and proud history of the Cowlitz people. Exactly 150 years ago, the Cowlitz Tribe was driven from its aboriginal homeland in southwest Washington. Today the Washington State Senate recognized that we belong here, that we have a right to our land, and that we have a right to create new economic opportunities for our people."

"When I first learned the history of the Cowlitz, I was very impressed the Tribe had been a cohesive unit for so long," said Senator Margarita Prentice, the first of 21 sponsors of the resolution. "I felt theirs was a story that needed to be told. When the Tribe's spiritual leader offered the opening prayer for the Senate on April 4th, the gallery was full with Tribal members. It was very impressive and it was wonderful to have them here. I'm proud the Senate had a chance to recognize the Cowlitz."

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe secured formal acknowledgment as a federally recognized tribe on February 14, 2000. The Tribe is currently proceeding through the "fee to trust" process with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to establish a 152-acre reservation in Clark County, Washington. A scoping report, a first step in drafting an Environmental Impact Statement for planned development on the reservation, was released by the BIA in February.

The Tribe proposes to build a casino resort on its land. The facility would include a gaming floor, restaurant and retail facilities, convention and entertainment venues, 250-room hotel, Tribal cultural center and governmental offices, parking structure, and RV park.

-- MORE --

COWLITZ INDIAN TRIBE:

PAGE TWO:

Full text of Senate Resolution 8682:

By Senators Prentice, Esser, Swecker, Doumit, Jacobsen, Berkey, Keiser, Brown, Franklin, Rasmussen, Eide, Haugen, Spanel, Thibaudeau, Shin, McAuliffe, Regala, Roach, Fairley, Johnson and Kohl-Welles

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz Tribe have called the lands of Southwest Washington home since time immemorial; and

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz have been referred to as the "blue bloods of Southwest Washington"; and

WHEREAS, In 1855 when war erupted, Chief Atwin Stockam entered into an agreement that the Cowlitz would remain peaceful if a reservation would be established; and

WHEREAS, Although the Cowlitz were not involved in any battles, they were not granted their rightful land; and

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz never entered into a treaty, were never subdued, and never lost the rights to their land; and

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz have worked diligently throughout the twentieth century for the United States to acknowledge and recognize their rights and historical importance; and

WHEREAS, On April 12, 1973, the Indian Claims Commission determined the Cowlitz Tribe had been deprived of their original Indian title as of March 20, 1863, without compensation; and

WHEREAS, The commission only recognized the Cowlitz territory as encompassing 1.66 million acres, only two-thirds of the actual aboriginal territory of 2.4 million acres; and

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz have been patient and determined in the face of adversity, including adaptation to governmental policy change, encroachment on rights to fish, hunt, and live on their land, and broken promises; and

WHEREAS, The Cowlitz secured formal acknowledgment as a federally recognized tribe on February 14, 2000;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize and honor the persistent efforts and contributions of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to their community and state and congratulate their developments of the past, present, and future and encourage such actions by the Federal Government as necessary to expeditiously restore lands and opportunities to the Cowlitz People to maximize their economic and cultural development and well-being.

I, Thomas Hoemann, Secretary of the Senate, do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of Senate Resolution 8682, adopted by the Senate April 20, 2005.

#####