



**Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Tribal Council**

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April 9, 2015

Honorable Elizabeth Steiner Hayward and Greg Smith, Co-Chairs
Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on General Government
900 Court Street NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5518

Dear Senator Steiner Hayward and Representative Greg Smith:

On behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, I write to support increased funding for the Legislative Commission on Indian Affairs in Senate Bill 5518. I represent my tribe on the Commission and have recently been elected its chair. This is a commission that has served all Oregonians long and well. Since its creation under the leadership of Governor Atiyeh, the Commission has been a national leader in developing the government-to-government relationship between the state and the tribes of Oregon.

Our Commission on Indian Affairs is unique in the Nation. It plays a critical role in protecting our diminished cultural resources, still threatened by those who do not understand that they are all of our heritage. The Commission leads the conversation about the government-to-government relationship among state agencies. The process the Commission developed has led to careful, deliberate development of several bills each year to improve the process and prevents needless litigation between tribes and the state. The Tribal Trust Land tax exemption enacted in 1993, and made permanent in 2009, is an important example. The bill concept was discussed early on in the Government-to-Government Economic Development Cluster.

There is still one problem with the Commission: low funding, which has been unseen because of the effective work of our longtime director. The frequent travel to keep up the work between tribes and the state and to protect cultural resources is beyond two people. I do not know how the director and staff keep up with the work you have given them.

This is why the Siletz Tribe respectfully requests funding for another staff person, full-time if possible, for the Commission on Indian Services. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Delores Pigsley
Tribal Chairman