

Submitter: Thomas Busse
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1153

Although this bill appears on its face to focus on habitat conservation for species arbitrarily designated as "sensitive" by unelected bureaucrats, I wish to call attention to the real poison pill: Section 8, pertaining to "tribal review," which doesn't even appear in the OLIS legislative digest of this measure.

Section 8 carves out an extortionist provision for "tribal review," which is becoming an omnipresent problem in Oregon politics. Ever since tribal gaming was allowed by the courts, certain tribes have become flush with cash, and they have used this cash to enter Oregon politics.

Under the proposed legislation, any Oregon tribe, regardless of any historical or geographical connection to the water rights transfer at hand, can demand to insert itself into the Department of Water Resource's review process. What this essentially creates is a mafia-like extortionist racket, where parties in the rights negotiation have to pay off the tribal troll under the bridge. A tribe near the Dallas could require pay-to-play for a water transfer agreement in Douglas county. This makes no sense - unless the tribes are greasing the palms of this bill's sponsors. I suspect they are.