



August 27, 2021

Senate President Peter Courtney
Speaker Tina Kotek
Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod
House Republican Leader Christine Drazan

Dear Legislative Leadership,

As you know, we are deeply concerned about gambling expansion by the state - especially with the evolution of technology that promotes faster play and expands gaming options. If continued unchecked, this expansion will have significant detrimental impacts on addiction, tribal self-sufficiency, and Oregon's rural economies.

We appreciate the bipartisan support last session for House Bill 3394, which would have created a Task Force on State Gambling, and put a moratorium on the State Lottery's ability to expand to mobile games pending the task force report. It has been 25 years since the state conducted a comprehensive review of gambling, including the regulatory structure, how much gambling should be acceptable given the constitutional prohibition on private casinos, and the intent of the Lottery when passed by the voters.

The need for a pause and full review is evident by the online casino Luckii, which the Oregon Racing Commission licensed in 2020 without public notice, legislative input, or tribal consultation. Thankfully, the legislature took action and prohibited this online casino from continuing to operate in Oregon. However, the process by which Luckii was licensed is alarming. Moreover, it exposes how the state gambling policies and regulations are not adequate to address the other efforts to expand gambling by private and state entities.

Other examples include:

- The Oregon Racing Commission introduced legislation to expand their authority to license mobile sports betting, beyond horse racing (which the Lottery already offers).
- Traditional parimutuel betting has transformed to nothing more than random number slot machines under the cloak of historically run races.
- The Lottery developed plans to expand to mobile platforms such as keno and scratch-it tickets as well as new games such as fantasy sports.

House Bill 3394 had bipartisan support and passed unanimously in the House Rules Committee. We recognize time runs out to address every issue; however, this issue is urgent. The consequences are too significant to too many people in Oregon if we continue to rely upon gambling policies and regulations based on industry standards from 25 years ago, when horse racing was only a live event, and the State Lottery was a weekly drawing.


As you have done with other pressing issues, we urge you to establish a special joint committee on state gambling to lead the work outlined in House Bill 3394. Otherwise, the fate of Oregon's gambling future remains in the hands of ten appointed commissioners and two state agencies, where the record does not provide confidence of adequate study, public engagement, or tribal consultation.


Oregonians deserve gambling policies that are deliberate and strike the right balance between entertainment and economic development. They should also be assured that the state's regulatory framework reflects the current state of the industry, promotes transparency, integrity, and protects the health and safety of our communities.

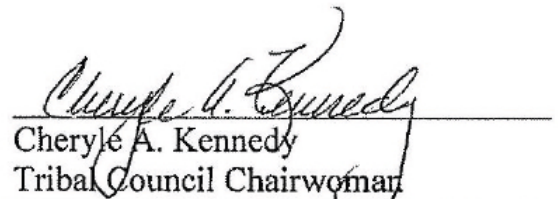
We hope to work with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,


N. Kathryn Brigham
Chair

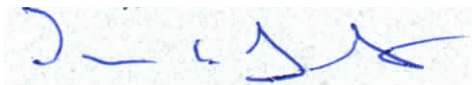

Chairman, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

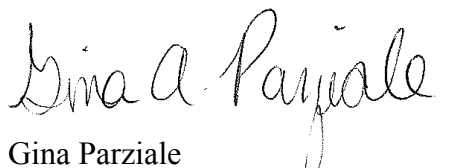

Debbie Bossley, Chairwoman
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Tribal Council



Cheryl A. Kennedy
Tribal Council Chairwoman
The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde



Christine "Kitty" Martz, CGRM, CGAC II, MBA
Executive Director
Voices of Problem Gambling Recovery


Donald C Gentry, Tribal Chair
The Klamath Tribes


Gina Parziale
Executive Director
Oregon Council on Problem Gambling


Jason Brandt
President & CEO
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association