



Washington State Legislature

March 8, 2013

The Honorable Jay Inslee
200 Legislative Bldg.
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are writing you today with our concerns regarding the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) decision to release the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on the Spokane Tribe's application to site an off-reservation casino on property near Fairchild Air Force Base. Both the process by which the FEIS was released, as well as the implications of the substance contained in the document, are deeply troubling.

The BIA chose to announce it was pushing out the release of the FEIS approximately 36 hours after the Spokane County Board of Commissioners had taken official action to oppose the Spokane Tribe's proposal, effectively silencing the analysis and insight from the largest local government in the region about how this proposal would impact our community. Equally troubling, the document released by the BIA ignores the opposition expressed by the City of Spokane, the City of Cheney and the concerns of other local civic groups, like Forward Fairchild. The BIA, in rendering a decision on such a controversial and precedent setting policy matter such as this one, should go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the record accurately reflects the facts and impacts on the ground. The document published by the BIA on Friday, February 1, is directly at odds with that objective, and we find it deeply disturbing that the agency appeared suddenly to be in such a rush to get this document out the door only hours after Spokane County voted to oppose the project.

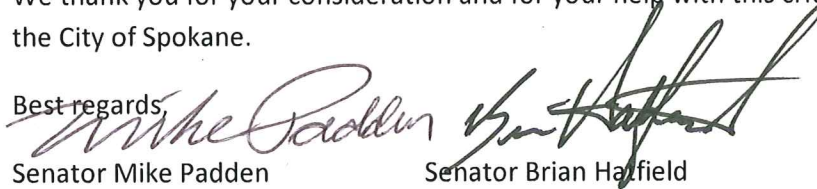
Substantively, the implications of this document couldn't be more damning for our region and state. The Spokane Tribe has over 150,000 acres of reservation land and currently operates two casinos, one of which already is off-reservation. If the Tribe is successful in its pursuit of a third casino on off-reservation land against the express wishes of the vast majority of local governments in the surrounding community, it will open up the floodgates to gaming in every community in our state, whether the community wants it or not. The possible decision to allow the Spokane Tribe to open a third casino in Airway Heights tells every other tribe in the state that it may it may develop a casino wherever it thinks it can be more profitable, regardless of how much gaming it already conducts and regardless of the detriment imposed on local communities. That result undermines the local community safeguards that

are intended to be built into the "two-part determination" provision, and would be a dangerous outcome for the state and Indian Country.

Ultimately, we want to see the Spokane Tribe be successful and prosperous, but we strongly oppose its proposed off-reservation casino project. We stand against the Tribe's proposal because of the negative impacts it will have on our community, as expressed best by the elected officials and leaders who live in this community. If the Department of the Interior is to adopt a policy which blatantly ignores the expressed views of elected officials in the surrounding community, there will be no reasonable check and balance by which surrounding communities have a say in whether tribal gaming may be expanded into their localities. We think it would set a very dangerous precedent for our entire state. We urge you to take quick action to oppose the Spokane proposal so there can be no doubt as to where our State Government stands on this critical decision now before us.

We thank you for your consideration and for your help with this critical issue for Spokane County and the City of Spokane.

Best regards,



Senator Mike Padden



Senator Brian Hatfield



Senator Mark Schoesler



Senator Mike Baumgartner



Representative Matt Shea



Representative Kevin Parker




Representative Dean Takko



Representative Marko Liias



Representative Brian Blake



Representative Roger Goodman



Representative Christopher Hurst



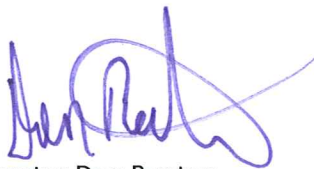
Senator Curtis King



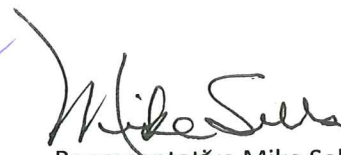
Representative Charles Ross



Representative Sherry Appleton



Senator Don Benton



Representative Mike Sells