



To: U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

From: Reynold L. Leno, Tribal Council Chairman, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Subject: May 16, 2017, American Indian/Alaska Native Public Witness Hearings

Chairman Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Reyn Leno and I am the Tribal Council Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to raise an issue of great importance to Grand Ronde and similarly situated tribes in Indian Country – the lack of adequate law enforcement funding for our reservations. In particular, my remarks will highlight the continued impacts termination has had on Grand Ronde’s ability to secure federal funding for much needed law enforcement services.

Grand Ronde is located in rural northwest Oregon and is comprised of 5,389 members. The Tribe’s Reservation is located in the outlying areas of Polk and Yamhill Counties.

The Tribe was terminated by the federal government in 1954 then restored in 1983. The burden of rebuilding the reservation fell on the shoulders of the Tribe. Grand Ronde, like other terminated tribes, did not receive any of the federal investments in services and infrastructure available to Indian Country in the years before restoration. Since restoration, the Tribe has put forth significant effort into rebuilding its Tribal community, including the development of various types of tribal housing, government buildings, an education complex, a health and wellness center, fire and police stations, management of over 10,000 acres of timber lands, and operation of a successful casino. The Tribe has made substantial contributions into the infrastructure of the surrounding community as well, including roads, water systems, fire protection, and more.

While Grand Ronde has made great strides in rebuilding its Reservation community, the Tribe continues to suffer the effects of the 29 years of termination, and it continues to be disenfranchised when seeking funding for infrastructure needs such as law enforcement. The Grand Ronde community has grown significantly over the last two decades, and along with that population growth has come an increase in crime. The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department and the Polk County Sheriff’s Office handled nearly 900 cases in 2015 and more than 1,000 cases in 2016 in the Grand Ronde area. Cases logged by the Grand Ronde Tribal Police

Department alone, through early May, suggest we are on track to handle an estimated 1,200 cases in 2017. Drug-related crime is a historic and persistent concern for our Tribal community, as is the growth of sex crimes.

Due to the high crime in the community and inadequate County resources, since 1997 the Tribe has funded or provided criminal law enforcement on and near its reservation and the surrounding community. Because of the Tribe's remote location, there is a history of inadequate police coverage. To address this, the Tribe entered into Enhanced Service Agreements with Polk County between 1997 and 2012, under which the Tribe paid the County hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to provide coverage in the Grand Ronde community. In 2012, following the passage of Oregon Senate Bill 412 – state law which allows Tribal police officers to act as peace officers under Oregon law – the Tribe started its own police department and began enforcing criminal law in the Grand Ronde area. Grand Ronde now has primary responsibility for law enforcement in the area.

The Grand Ronde Police Department has been slowly making strides in its law enforcement and community safety programs, and is beginning to see what we hope are positive trends in certain crime rates. Unfortunately, we continue to see sex crimes on the rise, especially those involving youth. Drugs remain a persistent concern in our community. Any reduction in force would result in a loss of any gains made, much less reduce our capacity to keep our youth safe and keep drugs off of our lands.

The Tribe has never received operational funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and its requests for funding have been denied. The Tribe has utilized COPS grants and State grants to fund some law enforcement and emergency preparedness functions, but does not have an identified source of funding for continuing police operations, for which it requires BIA funding. Due to the high crime rates in the remote and rural area – which also contains one of the largest tourist destinations in the State – it is imperative that, in the absence of Polk County enhanced services, there be police protection to ensure the safety of the community. In order for the Tribe to provide adequate law enforcement, it needs BIA funding.

The Tribe has requested that the Bureau of Indian Affairs enter into a 638 contract with the Tribe under which the Tribe would perform law enforcement services. The request was denied on the grounds that the Bureau of Indian Affairs isn't currently providing law enforcement services to the Tribe and thus there is no program to transfer to the Tribe in a 638 contract. Had Grand Ronde not been terminated in 1954, we believe the Bureau of Indian Affairs would have provided law enforcement services on the Reservation, thus allowing the Tribe today to qualify for a 638 contract to fund its law enforcement.

As a tribe terminated in the 1950s, Grand Ronde is at a severe disadvantage as it is unable to secure law enforcement funding through the PL-638 program, as it was not federally recognized during the self-determination era when these federal programs were established. Tribes that have been terminated and subsequently restored are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to accessing federal funding for law enforcement.

There is a lack of law enforcement funding for Indian Country. Grand Ronde is not alone – those tribes who have been restored following the termination era face additional challenges in securing funding. BIA funding should be made available to those tribes who have been terminated and restored and who provide criminal law enforcement in their respective communities.