

Testimony on H.R. 2839
Honorable Val Hoyle
June 7, 2023

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians should be able to hunt, fish, and gather on their ancestral lands just like almost all the other tribes in Oregon and across the country.

The Siletz Tribe was stripped of their land and status in 1954 through the Western Oregon Termination Act. In 1980, the Siletz Tribe was forced to give up their right to hunting and fishing on tribal lands to restore their federal recognition. This restriction is called a consent decree. It is an unjust and racist policy that I believe needs to be changed immediately.

My bipartisan bill provides the legal ability for the Siletz tribe to renegotiate a hunting and fishing agreement with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Siletz Tribe has worked in good faith with the other Tribes in region to avoid contested areas, which is reflected in this bill.

H.R. 2839 is about fairness. Siletz Tribal members should be able to hunt, fish, trap, and gather like they have traditionally done for thousands of years. They should be treated as other Tribes are.

The Siletz are one of two Tribes in the entire country that were forced to give up a sovereign right in order to have federal status restored.

The other Tribe is the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. While the Grand Ronde are here to discuss a separate issue today, I am also an original cosponsor of similar legislation to allow them to renegotiate their fishing and hunting rights with the state of Oregon as well. I am hopeful that the Pacific Northwest Congressional delegation will work together to help make sure that we can remove the consent decree for the Grand Ronde Tribe as well, and end Oregon's dubious distinction as the only state with tribes bound by such consent decrees.

But today, we have an opportunity to remove the bondage of the consent decree from the Siletz nation. I am proud to sponsor this bill and I urge this committee to support this important legislation.