



The Portland Garden Club



Friends of Mount Hood



Friends of the East Fork

FROM THE DESK OF CECIL D. ANDRUS

July 13, 2009

Secretary Ken Salazar
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We, the undersigned groups, are writing to make you aware of a serious and impending threat to one of America's most treasured landscapes: the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, located in Oregon and Washington. Specifically, we believe that development of a 600,000-square-foot casino resort and associated parking lots and retail structures in the heart of the Gorge National Scenic Area and within one-half mile of a wilderness boundary would significantly harm the natural environment and resources of this federally protected area.

This proposal to construct an off-reservation casino in the Columbia River Gorge is currently under review by the Department of Interior. While we are sensitive to the desires of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, we urge you and the Department to deny this proposal and to work with the Warm Springs people to find a suitable alternative location on their reservation land in central Oregon to replace their existing casino and resort.

Like the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks, the Columbia River Gorge is a federally protected iconic landscape. Congress adopted special protections for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and the Gorge's wilderness areas in order to protect these natural treasures from inappropriate development. These federal designations are also designed to protect the fish, wildlife, water, wildflowers, scenic corridors, and recreational resources of the Gorge. All of these goals and resources are threatened by the proposed Gorge casino.

We appreciate your careful consideration of this matter, and we urge you and the Obama Administration to protect the spectacular Columbia River Gorge from inappropriate development, so that the Gorge's sensitive and unique resources may be enjoyed by future generations.

Sincerely,

Cecil D. Andrus

Betsy Loyless,
Senior Vice President for Policy
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Greenpeace

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