

TESTIMONY OF KATHRYN HARRISON - PRO RESERVATION PANEL

August 10, 1987

Congressman AuCoin, I thank you for understanding our plight and supporting our Restoration Act P.L. 98-165, which became law on November 22nd, 1983. My name is Kathryn Harrison, Secretary of the Grand Ronde Tribal Council. I would like to limit my testimony this evening to a brief history of the events leading up to the restoration of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the further efforts by the federal government to establish -- or I should say re-establish -- a tribal reservation.

In 1975, when our work began on our restoration effort, my people had a vision of a homeland and a chance to become self-sufficient. Many long hours of hard work by a lot of people went into our fight to reverse the termination era that was forced upon us by the U.S. government in 1954. Perhaps our restoration effort was defined best in an editorial which appeared on May 18th, 1983 in the Sheridan Sun. In support of our efforts, the editor wrote,

"Why should Federal Status be restored? Here are just some of the following reasons:

-It would enable the tribe - some 1200 persons- to begin economic development plans that would allow these Indians to become self sufficient.

- It would provide the tribe with a land base—perhaps several thousand acres eventually. Indians have a strong tradition of working with the land.

-It would restore identity to these Indians and also restore pride in their self-worth.

- It would allow these Indians to receive health care and to implement safe, sanitary housing programs.

These are all admirable goals, we think, and deserving of our support."

I pointed out, however, in a follow-up letter to the editor which appeared on June 1st, 1983 in the Sun, that our restoration bill would not give any land to the Tribe. Instead a two year study would be conducted to investigate the possibility of a land base for the Tribe which would require a second congressional bill. And tonight we are testifying on behalf of that bill.

The Sun continued to support a reservation over the following months, and so stated in a signed editorial on August 7th, 1985. The initial paragraph states: "We wholeheartedly endorse the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and their efforts to create a new reservation."

I am truly at a loss to explain why the Sun has dramatically and suddenly reversed its editorial position.

I am also mystified at the claim that there was no notification or discussion relating to the establishment of a reservation. These four-year-old newspaper articles clearly prove otherwise.

Tonight, I feel close to my ancestors, and I feel it is fitting that we are meeting here in view of Spirit Mountain like they must have done so many times, gathering together, long ago.

Yes, all of our efforts for becoming a federally recognized Tribe were rewarded by an over-whelming response of support from our friends and neighbors both near and far away-some of you are with us here tonight. To each of you, I say "THANK YOU". We felt then, and we feel now, that by helping ourselves we would be helping this community.

Congressman AuCoin, I thank you once again for P.L. 98-165-which has breathed new life into my people while the old ways are still with us. Thank you and may God bless.