



# Intertribal Timber Council

P.O. Box C, Warm Springs, Oregon 97761

(503) 553-1161

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AUGUST 10, 1987

STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL R. CLEMENTS,  
PRESIDENT, INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL,  
ON H.R. 3060 AND H.R. 3061,  
TO CREATE A RESERVATION FOR THE  
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE GRAND RONDE COMMUNITY OF OREGON

Representative AuCoin, good afternoon. I am Michael Clements, President of the Intertribal Timber Council. I am here today to support the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon in the establishment of their reservation. I know the Grand Ronde's have invested a great amount of time and effort in trying to calculate a reservation that could fairly provide for their minimum requirements as a Tribal community, and I hope the Congress will be able to honor their request for approximately 16,000 acres.

As President of the Intertribal Timber Council, or the I.T.C., I would like to briefly share with you today some general observations about Indian timber and its Federal management that might help give some perspective to the timbered reservation that is being contemplated here today. As brief background, I would like to add that the I.T.C. is an eleven year old organization who's 5\_ member Tribes hold more than 90% of the 5.9 million acres of commercial Indian timber land. It has been my honor to serve as the I.T.C.'s President for the past five years.

First of all, I would like to emphasize the amount of importance that the timber Tribes place upon the proper management of our forest resource. For many of the I.T.C.'s member Tribes, their forest is their only substantial and stable source of Tribal income and jobs. Reservations are principally located in remote parts of the country, and despite many of our best efforts, economic development comes hard. That reality serves to underline our reliance on our timber resource. Through thick and thin, our forests must be there to help sustain us, and that depends entirely on their proper management.

Our reservations are finite tracts of land. They are all we have. If they are over cut today, or allowed to become disease infested, the Tribe cannot just go over the next ridge to secure an additional harvest. If our forests are mismanaged, our Tribes will have to suffer the impoverishing consequences for many, many years into the future. So it is in our best self interest, and an integral part of our self preservation, that our forests be operated under the best management regimes. Furthermore, we must have healthy forests that supply a steady flow of logs to the market over a long period of time. It is the income from the regular harvesting of our timber upon which most of the timber Tribes must pin their plans for a steady future. To assure such

long term steady income, first class management is essential.

It was to help assure this goal of professional, high quality forest management that the Intertribal Timber Council was founded. We work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Branch of Forestry, not against them, to try to achieve the professional management that will perpetuate our forests and the income from them. And it pleases me to say that I believe the I.T.C.'s efforts have been successful. Over the past eleven years, through extensive dialogue between the Tribes and the Bureau, the Forestry Branch has made conscientious efforts to provide sustained yield management of the first quality. Today, the Branch of Forestry is widely considered to be the most professional and best run arm of the B.I.A. It is an increasingly efficient and effective organization. However, before I get carried away, I must hasten to add that everything is not completely hunky-dory. There are still plenty of improvements to be made, and the Tribes, along with the Intertribal Timber Council, will continue to keep pressing for those improvements. But, for its part, the Branch of Forestry, as best it can, is accessible, informative, and responsive.

It should be pointed out that the I.T.C. also seeks to work with the private sector of the timber industry, and recently there has been an emphasis not only on forest management, but on getting Tribal logs into the marketplace as well. After all, the timber income upon which we depend is directly linked to the sales of our logs into the private sector market.

Underlying the Tribes desires and efforts to obtain steady income and first class management for our forests, and the Bureau's efforts to comply, is the unique and well established doctrine of the Federal trust responsibility. Because the Federal government holds the title to Indian lands in trust, it has the fiduciary obligation to prudently manage that land and its resources for the long term benefit of the Indian owners. That trust responsibility essentially mandates a term of continuity and standard of management for Tribal timber that is at least as high and probably higher than that for other Federally managed forests. Such a legal backstop for long term quality management we believe is a great benefit not only to the Tribes, but to our neighbors as well.

Finally, I am very pleased to say that the Congress has been very supportive of Tribal forestry and the Federal obligation to properly manage it. I should especially like to extend our thanks and our gratitude to you, Representative AuCoin, for your constant support in these trying budget times. Your efforts, and those of your fellow Subcommittee members, have promoted and preserved the improvements that have been made in Indian forestry.

So, in summary, it is the Tribes themselves who depend, perhaps more than any other party, on the steady production of their

forests, both today and for years into the future. To assure that, the Tribes are constantly working together with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to achieve a highly professional level of management. Underpinning that effort is the legal obligation of the Federal trust responsibility. And, in recognition of those efforts and responsibilities, the Congress has consistently given the Indian timber program its close attention and backing.

With this, I suggest that the creation of a timbered reservation for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will not be some frightful venture into the unknown, but rather will produce a stable, long-term resource beneficial not only to the Grand Ronde, but to all their surrounding communities as well.