



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Governor's Office

October 21, 1983

*10/25 note - Donaldson
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Honorable Victor G. Atiyeh
Governor, State of Oregon
254 State Capitol Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Governor Atiyeh:

It deeply troubles me to bring to your attention my displeasure with the performance and professionalism of a member of your staff. This troubles me because this is the first time in my thirty-year professional career I have been so moved to take action such as this.

On October 18, 1983, by arrangements through Dr. Jack Donaldson, I and members of my staff met in my office with Mr. Ed Zajonc, Director, Oregon Division of State Lands; Mr. Stanley Hamilton, his assistant and Dr. Donaldson. The purpose, as we surmised, was to determine if there was an endangered species issue, requiring Section 7 consultation under the Endangered Species Act, and if so, how could we work together to expedite a planned development on Tongue Point near Astoria.

Very early in the discussion, two things became readily apparent. First, much to our surprise, Mr. Zajonc, the head of a State Land agency, lacked knowledge and an understanding of the requirements of the Corps of Army Engineers' permitting process and requirements for endangered species consultation in that permitting process, if necessary. Secondly, he was more concerned with alleging improprieties about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and members of my staff.

His rudeness and belligerent mannerisms were repeatedly displayed. Even when I, and members of my staff, attempted to respond to questions of his, he, in rapid fire manner, chose not to listen (nor understand) and rudely kept right on "talking."

Frankly, Governor, it was the worst example I have ever witnessed of an individual, especially of his stature, being unprepared--to the point of not even reading his own Department's documents which note the potential for endangered species issue resolution. When questioned if he had read his own plan, his response was: "I don't read plans, if I did I wouldn't be where I am."

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Governor Victor Atiyeh - October 21, 1983

With due respect to Dr. Donaldson, with who I have had many rewarding and enjoyable professional relationships, I resisted an immediate impulse to terminate the meeting. Fortunately, after over an hour of wasted time, Mr. Zajonc finally recognized that our (USFWS) mission and goal is to assist folks, agencies and organizations to accomplish their objectives within the limits of the law. Consequently, the meeting ended with that understanding and agreement.

Governor, I apologize for writing to you with such news. However, as a proud resident of this great State, I strongly object to such behavior by representatives of our State government--as I am certain you do. And, as a representative of the Department of the Interior, I strongly resent allegations of impropriety--especially when done in complete ignorance and when no basis whatsoever exists for such allegations.

Respectfully yours,



Richard J. Myshak
Regional Director