

February 12, 2017

TO: Leadership of Environmental Organizations opposed to Elliott State Land Sale

Doug Moore, Director, Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Erica Stock, Director, Sierra Club

Josh Laughlin, Director, Cascadia Wildlands

Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director, Audubon Society of Portland

Guido Rahr, President and CEO, Wild Salmon Center

Jeremy Barnicle, Executive Director, EcoTrust



FROM: Western States Center,
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon,
Unite Oregon,
NAACP Portland

RE: Critical questions on lack of racial justice analysis in Elliott State Forest Sale

Dear Colleagues:

This is not the desired forum or process, however we are compelled to express our disappointment in the lack of engagement and due diligence your organizations have shown to the Tribes involved in the potential purchase of the Elliott Forest. Your organization has mobilized opposition to the sale, with little to no engagement with the Tribes who would have, once again, become the stewards of this land along with their neighbors whom they have developed relationship, trust and, shared vision with at Lone Rock Timber Company. This lack of consideration and engagement exposes a rift between environment and Tribes that simply should not exist in a world where we aspire to greater collaboration.

It is of grave concern to those of us who sign on to this letter. Many of us work for racial, gender and economic justice as our main focus. We also care about the environment, its sustainability and protection. We also note the many ways in which environmental groups in Oregon remain predominantly white, and work from a place of white privilege; this situation is a very clear example of the lack of racial justice analysis applied to what is a complicated situation. It remains a block to collaboration.

Public lands are a critical trust for the whole state and the value of this land is far beyond its dollar value. We do not take the sale of public lands lightly. While Governor Brown issued a new proposal Friday, February 10th around this particular tract, the concern goes beyond this single question, and her proposal does not mitigate the concerns around the bid that is under consideration. There is a significant difference however when the stewardship, economic benefit and potential ability for Tribes to regain some of the lands are also at stake. It is disappointing, and a pattern all too familiar with those who sign this letter, that your organization did not seem to find consideration of these important enough to develop an alternative proposal or before mobilizing your supporters against the single partnership bid that was developed at great effort by the Tribes involved. The path that we are on now was significantly influenced by the pressure of your coalitions' extensive public engagement campaigns which were based upon your disregard for the bid coalition and all of the conservation and public access assurances therein.

We request that you take no further public action until you have engaged in deep and respectful dialogue with the Tribes and other parties concerned. Until you do so, you have not done your due diligence and are misleading your supporters as to what is at stake in this sale of land which was originally confiscated by the U.S. from the Tribes.

This letter is not meant as an end, but a beginning. For us to work collegially, for the planet and its people to work together, we have to be able to identify how to overcome differences. We do not want our deep concern to go unremarked without calling your attention to it. We look forward to the opportunity to work together, collectively and respectfully, to protect and strengthen the places and communities we share.

Kind Regards,

Western States Center,
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon,
Unite Oregon,
NAACP Portland

CC: Oregon Land Board,
The Conservation Fund,
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians,
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians,
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians,
Lone Rock Timber Company