



# COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE

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## Tribe Applauds Forest Fairness Bill

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Coquille Indian Tribe is pleased and hopeful after the U.S. House passed a bill that would promote innovative Native American forestry practices while boosting local job creation.

“We are happy to have Congress recognize the disparity that burdened our tribe for so long,” said Tribal Chairwoman Brend Meade.

The Coquilles are one of three southern Oregon tribes that would be helped by the Western Oregon Tribal Fairness Act. Sponsored by Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the bill provides land in trust to the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and to the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

The bill wouldn’t grant any land to the Coquille Tribe, but it would free the Coquilles to manage land they already own, to meet the triple goals of job creation, environmental protection and cultural restoration.

Congress restored 5,400 acres of forest to the tribe in 1996, but it tied the land’s management to the standards governing nearby federal lands. The Coquilles are the only U.S. tribe working under this unique legal burden, which limits the Coquilles’ ability to manage their lands efficiently and effectively.

Meade noted that the Coquille Tribe is renowned for its consistent record of sustainable harvest, surpassing the performance of any federal forest in the region. It employs scientific forestry in tandem with environmental values that have protected its ancestral homelands for thousands of years.

Once freed from cumbersome federal rules, Meade said, the Coquilles could use a science-based, adaptive forest model that creates more wood-products jobs for the community.

Thanks to DeFazio’s persistent efforts in recent years, the House repeatedly has passed bills to “decouple” the Coquille Forest from federal rules. But the bills have always stalled in the Senate.

“We do hope this is our year,” Meade said.

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