



The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

P.O. Box 150, Nespelem, WA 99155

(509) 634-2200

FAX: (509) 634-4116



September 4, 2015

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

On behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 538, the “Native American Energy Act.”

The CCT is particularly supportive of Section 6 of the bill, which we were involved in developing and would establish a Tribal Biomass Demonstration Project. In addition to encouraging biomass development and strengthening local economies, the Demonstration Project would also promote forest health and watershed restoration on federal lands. Section 6 would provide new tools for Indian tribes like the CCT to ensure that neighboring federal forestlands or rangelands are healthy and do not threaten our on-reservation tribal lands with wildfire or disease.

The CCT is in the midst of the worst wildfire season in recent memory, with two fires—the Okanogan Complex and North Star fires—collectively burning nearly 250,000 acres on the Colville Reservation. These fires have been burning for more than two weeks and are not yet contained. The sheer size of these fires is attributable in part to the condition of the federal land adjacent to our reservation borders, much of which is overgrown and has been long in need of forest health treatments. Section 6 of the bill would provide tribes like the CCT with an additional avenue to conduct these activities on a long term basis and better protect our homelands.

The CCT also strongly supports Section 7, which would ensure that activities conducted by tribes under federally approved resource management plans satisfy federal sustainability requirements.

For these reasons, the CCT strongly supports swift passage of H.R. 538. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Boyd
CHAIRMAN