

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

Soon, the Bureau of Indian Affairs will conduct an election to determine whether the Siletz Constitution will be amended to limit voting rights and prohibit tribal employees from serving on the council.

As it was adopted, our Constitution is a model of "inclusion." As a people, we pride ourselves in our commitment to equal rights for all tribal members. If we adopt the proposed amendment, we will become a tribe that promotes "exclusion."

Why is this amendment under consideration? I wish I had a good answer to that. I wish a good reason existed to exclude some tribal members from the political process.

Proponents say that tribal employees inherently are in a conflict situation. Can anyone truthfully say that tribal voters cannot decide who will best represent them on the council? Can anyone truthfully say that every tribal employee will abuse his or her position if elected?

No one disputes that safeguards are necessary to prevent council members from abusing their offices. We have many safeguards in place, including a constitutional prohibition against council members voting on matters where a conflict exists. Our ethics codes and other rules prohibit all kinds of bad conduct. Our council, if it chooses to, already has authority to do what is necessary to prevent abuses in office.

More important, we need to remember that we now have the greatest safe-

guard of all against council abuse. We have the right to cast a vote in every election for the candidates of our choice. As voters, if the council won't police itself, we can do it for them by voting them out. The amendment speaks loudly that tribal voters can't be trusted to vote wisely. Every tribal member should be offended by this insinuation.

Sadly, the purpose of this election isn't to protect the tribe as a whole. Make no mistake about it, the fundamental reason a minority of our council wants this amendment is simply to exclude potential, qualified opposition candidates from running against them.

If the amendment passes, a significant and productive segment of our tribal population, and future generations of our tribal population, will be barred from participation in tribal government. And the only reason is to protect some council members' seats.

This election is about the rights of all tribal members to run for the Tribal Council and to have full and fair choices to make in each and every election. Letting the voters decide and letting all tribal members participate in our government is democracy. Prohibiting anyone, let alone a whole segment of our membership, from participating in government is discrimination.

Please join me in protecting our rights and **vote no** to defeat this unnecessary and discriminatory amendment.

Thank you,
Alfred "Bud" Lane III

To the editor:

We've all probably received our mail-out registration packet and the deadline even expired to register with the BIA for the special constitutional election. I hope everyone did register and is taking this threat to our rights seriously.

Those on council who voted to bring this issue to us in this way are apparently willing to use any means to get their way. There has already been a court case over this issue and the judge spoke clearly on the issue, cautioning the Siletz Tribal Council to not interfere with tribal members' constitutional rights.

The people have also clearly spoken on the issue previously by voting Bud Lane into office when he was already employed with the tribe while stating openly that he intended to challenge the policies and ordinances set by Tribal Council barring tribal member employees from serving on council.

I'm sickened by the time, energy, and money wasted by council in fighting this issue when there is, as I've already said, clear direction from the court and our tribal people. This is simply an attempt by some of our Tribal Council members to limit the field of candidates (i.e., competition), which catches them in a contradiction because the same ones used a potential larger field of candidates as reasons to vote

for the proposed hourly rate increase for council wage.

Do we really want to establish tribal member employees as second-class tribal citizens? And limit their ability to contribute to the decision-making body of our tribe when they are often the most qualified and experienced in dealing with the issues?

What about the goal of employing even more tribal members in our administration, casino, and the growing list of affiliated businesses? All would be barred – based on their employment status – if you vote yes. Barring a class of people in an already small pool is a threat to effective tribal government.

We have had a tribal member employee serving since last February. The sky has not fallen and he has contributed greatly to the discussion and decision-making of the tribe.

Please think long and hard before voting on this issue and decide if we really want to begin limiting tribal members' rights by amending our Constitution. Our Constitution has served us well and to tamper with that is a serious matter.

Please vote **no** on the constitutional amendment and tell the Tribal Council members responsible for this to focus on more constructive issues.

Sincerely,
Robert Kentta

Siletz Tribe, Chinook Winds, Chamber Host Candidates Fair

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, Chinook Winds Casino Resort, and the Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce will co-host a Candidates Fair in the casino's convention center on Oct. 3 at 2 p.m.

All candidates who will appear on the ballot for Lincoln City voters have been invited to participate in this event, including those running for city, county, state, and federal offices.

Local radio personality Roger Robertson from KBCH will moderate the Candidate's Fair and monitor

the live remote that will be broadcast over radio stations KBCH in Lincoln City and KNPT in Newport, reaching a listening audience covering central and north Lincoln County as well as south Tillamook County.

The format allows each candidate time to present his/her platform and answer questions from the audience.

The public is encouraged to attend this free event. Refreshments will be provided and tables will be available for candidates' information and information on ballot measures.

October USDA Distribution Dates

Siletz

Monday, Oct. 4	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 5	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 6	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Thursday, Oct. 7	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 8	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Salem

Monday, Oct. 18	1:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday, Oct. 19	9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Oct. 20	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

We are making some very exciting changes to the USDA commodity program in the coming months. Come by and check it out if you get the opportunity.

We also would like to thank Ramona Fisher for placing youth at our warehouse for the summer. Spencer Hatch has been a great addition to the ware-

house, especially when we are palletizing food to take to our Salem warehouse and receiving shipments.

Thanks also to Frede Rodriguez, and they always had a friend with them, Josh VanHoorebeke. They were a great help with distribution, transfers, and new shipments.

Remember, we are always looking for a community member to come into our kitchen at both the Salem and Siletz warehouses to do a cooking demonstration. If you call in advance and let us know what you need for your recipe, we will make sure we have the additional items.

Happy meals!

