

Senate committee OKs George nomination

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

The Oregon Senate Rules Committee moved the nomination of Grand Ronde Tribal Council member Kathleen George as one of three new members of the state Environmental Quality Commission on to a full Senate vote on Wednesday, April 26.

George was nominated to the commission by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in March to replace three members who were fired.

The commission is a five-member panel appointed by the governor to four-year terms. Members serve as the state Department of Environmental Quality's policy and rulemaking board. It also issues orders, judges appeals of fines or other departmental actions, and appoints the department's director.

George would join the commission along with fifth-generation Oregonian Wade Mosby and Oregon State University associate professor Molly Kile. Current commission members Sam Baraso and Ed Armstrong will continue serving.

"Most of my career has been spent in the environmental arena," George testified, "helping Tribes identify and work with partners on the state and federal level to protect people, air, land and water. I am hoping that my experience in working on both the east side and west side of our state can be helpful having worked with a wide variety of communities to address environmental challenges and seek solutions. I hope my background and experience can be of service to the state on the Environmental Quality Commission." George was elected to Tribal



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Council member Kathleen George participates in a hearing before the Oregon Senate Rules Committee for her nomination to the state Environmental Quality Commission at the State Capitol building in Salem on Wednesday, April 26. Also nominated to the commission with her are Molly Kile, front, and Wade Mosby, back.

Council in September 2016. Before her election, she was director of Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the Tribe's philanthropic arm, from September 2011 through her election to council.

She also worked for the Tribe's Natural Resources Department as its environmental coordinator from 1996 to 2002 before moving to eastern Oregon to work for the Umatilla Tribe as a water policy and senior policy analyst. She also worked for the Department of Environmental Quality in Pendleton and owned a natural resources consulting business, Cedar Consulting.

George graduated from Dominican University in California with a bache-

lor's degree in environmental biology.

The Rules Committee included Democratic Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli and Democratic Sen. Arnie Roblan, both of whom sit on the Legislative Commission for Indian Services, and senators Lee Beyer, a Democrat, and Brian Boquist, a Republican.

Brown's dismissal of the three commissioners did not go unmentioned as the hearing stretched to 27 minutes and the three nominees were eventually approved in a party-line 3-2 vote.

Boquist and Ferrioli asked the three nominees about their expertise in air quality and working with

a regulatory agency.

"The three of you are here under unusual circumstances in the history of Oregon," Boquist said, inquiring about the expertise that the three nominees had since Brown's office is pushing for stricter air quality standards in Oregon.

George said her work in the environmental arena involved reducing toxic substances "broadly" to decrease risk to people and resources. "Certainly, one primary method of that exposure is through water or through fish, but another is certainly through air or even dermal exposure. So there are numerous pathways even though I spent most of my time on the more policy side of water," she said.

Boquist, from Dallas, cautioned the three nominees that their honeymoon period on the commission might be brief considering the recent controversy.

"The pleasure might be short for the three of you," he said.

Beyer, from Springfield, said that the three nominees bring a breadth of good experience to the commission and urged them to help keep Oregonians safe "in a practical manner."

"Helping people comply," Beyer said. "I hope that is where you spend most of your time."

George was accompanied by her husband, Rick, who works for the Grand Ronde Tribe as Planning Department director. Tribal lobbyist Justin Martin also attended the hearing.

George's nomination was one of 55 considered by the Rules Committee to 26 Oregon boards and commissions. The full Senate will vote on the nomination in early May. ■

ELDERS FISHING TRIP

JUNE 1, 2017
9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

The F&W Committee extends an invitation to ALL ELDERS to join in for a day filled with fun and fishing! Event held at Hebo Lake.

YOUR TRIBAL FISHING LICENSE IS REQUIRED!

No state fishing license is needed, but you will need a Tribal fishing license to fish
No fee to attend and the opportunity to fish from both land and boat will be available

NEED YOUR TRIBAL FISHING LICENSE?
Contact: Natural Resources Division 503-879-2424

RAIN OR SHINE EVENT! DRESS APPROPRIATELY

- Picnic lunch will be provided by the committee
- The trip is limited to the first 25 Tribal Elders and spouses who sign up at the Elders Activity Center or by calling 503-879-2233
- We encourage those riding in the vans to please arrive by 7:45 a.m. to load the vans and leave at 8 a.m.
- Join us even if you don't fish but would like to attend to enjoy the view and outing.

Sign up sheet at the Elders Activity Center 503-879-2233


