

On behalf of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe:

The health and safety of the residents of Clark county is our primary concern. After all, we live here too. That's why we are investing nearly \$15 million to implement one of the most advanced water reclamation facilities in operation anywhere today. This advanced treatment process will protect groundwater through screening, nitrogen removal, biological waste removal, membrane bioreactor (MBR) technology, microfiltration technology, and dual disinfection.

This system is more advanced than secondary treatment plants used by municipalities in the state, and removes more than twice the amount of pharmaceuticals and personal care products and endocrine disrupting chemicals. It meets or exceeds requirements under the Environmental Protection Agency's Underground Injection Control (UIC) program, and recently EPA drinking water compliance manager Peter Contreras publicly commented that there are no concerns with the system. Those who would like to learn more are invited to attend a public information session on the system that we are hosting on June 30 at the La Center Community Center.

At the design phase of this project, there's no question the Tribe would have gone the normal route of hooking up to a municipal sewer system. However, we were repeatedly blocked by Clark County and the Card Rooms from doing so. Because the Cowlitz Reservation lies outside the city's urban growth boundary, the City of La Center was turned down twice by the Growth Management Board, and received a very clear negative ruling from Washington State Superior Court. Moreover, at every turn, Clark County and the owners of the La Center card rooms blocked the Tribe's efforts to connect with La Center sewer system. Even if the County allowed the Tribe to hook into the system, the ruling prohibits the City of La Center from extending a sewer line outside of the urban growth boundary.

Therefore, the Tribe engaged Parametrix, a leading wastewater engineering firm and one of the first to design MBRs using flat plate micro-filtration membranes. Thirty similar systems have been constructed in Washington State and hundreds are in use in the Northwest and all over the world. The Cowlitz Tribe chose to implement this water reclamation system to address our onsite needs and fulfill our core value of being stewards of the land and protecting it for generations to come. In addition, the Tribe entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the City of La Center to pay for a \$3 million sewer line running from La Center to the east side of the Exit 16 interchange along I-5 to aid in attracting future commercial development at the interchange. Currently, the owners of the La Center card rooms are appealing this IGA in court.

At this phase of the project, a change in direction would become a decision for the Cowlitz Tribal Council's Development Board.

--William Iyall, chairman, The Cowlitz Tribe.