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Tulalip Tribal Chairman

Gambling Expansion Advocates Ignore The Facts About Tribal Gaming

By Herman Williams, Jr.
Tulalip Tribal Chair

With the Washington State Legislature considering a radical expansion of gambling as a quick-fix to the ballooning budget crisis, a great deal of misinformation has been circulated about the origins, role, and impacts of tribal gaming operations.

This information—that tribal gaming is legally mandated to serve tribal communities—is essential to understanding the true impacts of gaming expansion on native people. It isn't just about eroding gambling revenues; expansion poses very real threats to recent gains in education, health care and public safety.

Expansion threatens rural job growth for Indians and non-Indians alike, and expansion represents a step backward for tribes that have reduced welfare dependency and worked hard to gain economic stability.

While newspapers, religious and civic groups, and a bipartisan coalition of former governors and law-enforcement officials have been clear in their opposition to expansion and it's impacts on our communities (see accompanying article), not a lot is known about the true nature and purpose of tribal casinos—first legalized only 15 years ago.

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The Children's Museum, Snohomish County Search & Rescue and the American Red Cross are just a few of the beneficiaries of Tulalip Tribes gaming revenues.

Snohomish County BioGas Project

– A Unique Collaboration for Success



BioGas: Improving the sustainability of dairy farming in Snohomish County.

What do the Tulalip Tribes and Snohomish County farmers have in common? They are collaborating on a BioGas program to address common concerns – the improvement of salmon habitat and the sustainability of dairy farming in Snohomish County. The Tulalip Tribes, Washington State Dairy Federation, Northwest

Chinook Recovery, and the Lower Skykomish River Habitat Conservation Group have entered into an agreement creating the Snohomish Basin BioGas Project. Simply stated, the BioGas project takes waste and turns it into power while protecting salmon habitat.

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Required by Law to Serve The Community

When passed by Congress in 1988, the Indian Gaming and Recreation Act (IGRA) carried with it a strict requirement to "provide statutory basis for the operation of gaming by Indian Tribes as a means of promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments."

In other words, tribes were only allowed to invest in casinos as a path toward self reliance and self sufficiency first and foremost. This means mandated reinvestment of gaming revenues into basic infrastructure and services like education, health care, elder care, and public safety.

Many tribes around the country, and here in Washington, are beginning to see the results of successful gaming operations. The Tulalip Tribes has been able to build new schools, a tribal health center, improve senior care, invest in roads and sewers, and increase fire and police protection.

The Tribes has also successfully reduced unemployment on the reservation and provided thousands of jobs for local community residents.

In other words, gaming has allowed the Tulalip Tribes to advance to the level of any other small, rural community—providing the infrastructure, services, and job base expected in most parts of the country.



The new Tulalip Health Care Clinic funded by Tulalip Tribes.

Gaming has allowed tribal communities to catch up to surrounding communities, to provide essential services required by law. After only a few years of operating successful casinos, many tribes are turning the corner to true economic self reliance, but clearly there is a long way to go.

Gaming: Key To Economic Diversification and Stability

For any maturing economy, diversification is the key to long-term stability and growth. The Tulalip Tribes view Quil Ceda Village as a means to a strong, diverse economy; other tribes, because of geography or other factors, have not been able to advance as quickly.



Tulalip's full-time police protection office, funded in part by gaming revenues.

While the Tulalips have invested in Quil Ceda as a way to reduce economic dependence on gambling, other tribes simply do not have the land base or revenue to pursue an aggressive diversification strategy. For them, gambling is all they have to provide the basics for their people.

Indian Gaming Works for People, Not Profit

The IGRA set forth strict guidelines for tribal gaming operations that have allowed tribes to reduce social welfare dependency, improve health care and education, and invest in roads and public safety. In contrast, local minicasinos and card rooms exist for one reason: to make a profit for their owners.



Tulalip's fire department, funded in part by gaming revenues.

This stark difference is critical to the debate, yet too often ignored by Olympia policymakers. As the Seattle Times noted in a February 12, 2003 editorial: "Tribal governments operate tribal casinos, and the money is invested back into their communities. Casino proceeds subsidize housing, jobs, educational and social benefits and a sizable amount of non-tribal employment."

As the many opponents of gaming expansion note, there are tremendous impacts to all of our communities from gaming expansion, but the fact that many tribes will lose their sole source of sustained revenue, placing so many critical programs in jeopardy, cannot be ignored.

We at Tulalip are proud of our success, and our ability to become active partners in the growth and diversification of our local economy in Snohomish County. And we are thankful that so many of our neighbors, community leaders, and friends have joined in opposition to a dangerous and devastating quick-fix for our state's economy.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your support.

Herman Williams, Jr.
Tulalip Tribal Chair

“Casino proceeds subsidize housing, jobs, educational and social benefits and a sizable amount of non-tribal employment.”

— Seattle Times
Editorial 2/12/03

Dairy cows produce manure, which in turn produces ground and surface water pollution - runoff from manure produces high concentrates of fecal coliform (a bacteria) in ground and surface water. As fecal coliform builds up in the water, the oxygen level drops the temperature level increases. And lower oxygen levels and higher water temperatures are bad for fish.

"The great thing about this project is that there so many pluses," stated Tulalip Tribal Chair, Herman Williams Jr. "We create green electricity, green fertilizer,

The Tribes and Snohomish County agricultural producers have faced common challenges as salmon runs have declined and as agricultural production has become less profitable. Today, fishing boats sit dry-docked on the edge of Tulalip Bay representing a diminished economy and culture of the Tulalip. Similarly, dairy farmers have faced economic hardship in the form of low milk prices, increased concentration in the dairy industry, urban sprawl and limitations on waste disposal. Many of Snohomish County's dairy

our cultures and lifestyle for the next generation, be it farming or fishing," he said.

Through a 20-year-old distributed energy technology, called Anaerobic Digestion, the Tulalips and local dairy farmers will produce electricity from cow manure. Cow manure releases methane gas during anaerobic digestion. The gas is then collected and burned to create electricity through gas-fired turbines or fuel cells. Normally manure is disposed of by spreading it across fields.



clean water, and improved fish habitat, all the while helping farmers turn a cost center into an asset center," he explained.

The Tulalip Tribes have been fishing for salmon in the Puget Sound area for thousands of years. Dairy farmers have a proud agricultural heritage in Snohomish County playing an import part of the region's economy. Snohomish County has over 1,200 farms, and county agriculture is a \$260 million dollar industry.

farms have closed and others are on the brink of closing.

What historically may have been two groups opposing each other, are now two groups finding common ground on issues relating to restoration of area salmon runs and an instrument to strengthen the local agricultural industry - BioGas technology. "It's very exciting partnering with the farmers," explains Williams. "What we have learned is that we both want and care about the same things; we want to ensure

Processing the manure keeps it off the fields and the coliform out of the ground water, which in turn keeps the water temperature at a fish friendly level. Additionally, a bi-product of the process leaves a 'green fertilizer' - compost that can be sold commercially.

"The disposal of cow manure can be quite an expense for dairy farmers," states Dale Reiner, a third generation farmer from Monroe, Wash. "With this collaborative effort farmers can take what

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— Herman Williams Jr.
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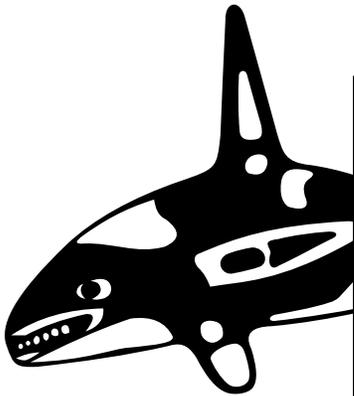
BioGas: Benefits more than just the environment

- Improves salmon habitat
- Generates a renewable energy supply
- Creates "green fertilizer"
- Eliminates public nuisance odor problems
- Replaces land spreading of manure
- Increase the number of cows a dairy farmer may keep
- Prevents further ground and surface water pollution
- Mitigates greenhouse gas emissions

Quil Ceda Village
8802 Quil Ceda Rd.
Tulalip, WA 98271



Inside this issue of the
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Reinvest in the Community.



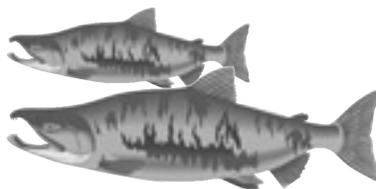
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- Gaming dollars reinvested in community.
- Tulalips collaborate with Snohomish County dairy farmers.

BioGas Project – continued



Board member Stan Jones, Dale Reiner and Chairman Herman Williams at Mr. Reiners' blanket presentation.



was once a cost – the disposal of manure – and turn it into a profit – the sale of green fertilizer and BioGas." Reiner said. Since manure management laws limit the number of cows per acre a dairy farmer may have, the use of a BioGas facility may allow farmers to increase the number of cows on their dairy farms. "This project may literally mean the difference between shutting down family farms and allowing them to thrive." Reiner explained.

The BioGas project exemplifies the power of cooperation in addressing issues that affect our entire communities.

"This project may literally mean the difference between shutting down family farms and allowing them to thrive."

– Dale Reiner
Monroe, WA, Farmer