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CLARK COUNTY  
WASHINGTON

## NEWS RELEASE

January 31, 2011

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### **County takes lead in appealing Cowlitz casino decision in federal court**

Vancouver, WA – Clark County is the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit filed today that seeks to overturn last month's federal decision to take land into trust to establish a reservation for the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

The decision would allow the Cowlitz to establish a tribal headquarters on a 152-acre site west of La Center next to Interstate 5 in unincorporated Clark County. If it stands, the decision would open the door for construction of a complex with 134,150 square feet of gambling space, 250-room hotel, retail shops, recreational vehicle park, wastewater treatment plant, tribal housing and cultural center.

The lawsuit argues that the Bureau of Indian Affairs exceeded its authority in approving the Cowlitz proposal, which would remove the interchange property from county jurisdiction, including land-use planning. In addition, the county contends that the BIA violated federal laws and regulations and was deficient in considering impacts to the county and state.

Joining the county in the appeal are the City of Vancouver; Citizens Against Reservation Shopping; nearby property owners Al Alexanderson and Greg and Susan Gilbert; and four cardrooms within the City of La Center.

The U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. is not expected to hear the case until this summer. The county is asking the U.S. Department of Justice to stop the trust process until the litigation is resolved.

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