

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Press Release



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New poll: Oregonians oppose a casino in the Gorge by more than 2:1

New poll results show that the Gorge casino proposal is opposed by 68% of registered voters in Oregon. This poll demonstrates that opposition to a Gorge casino is on the rise, with 5% more of Oregonians opposed since the same question was asked in 2005. Respondents also opposed large-scale development in the Gorge by a margin of 74.5% to 16.5%. The statewide poll was conducted the week of July 17th by Mercury Public Affairs, a bi-partisan polling service. There were 400 respondents and the margin of error was +/- 4.9%. Friends participated in the joint poll with several other conservation groups on a wide range of environmental issues.

“Oregonians are overwhelmingly opposed to a casino in the Columbia River Gorge, said Michael Lang, conservation director for Friends of the Columbia Gorge (Friends). Oregon residents simply do not believe the pro-casino rhetoric that the huge casino resort will not harm the outstanding scenic beauty and fish and wildlife in the Gorge.”

When asked if the casino is a **good idea** because it would have very little impact of air and water quality in the Gorge while provide jobs and tax revenue, **or** if it is a **bad idea** because of increased traffic, pollution and harm to fish and wildlife, 71.3% of poll respondents agreed that it was a bad idea.

Another major setback for the Gorge casino proposal occurred just two weeks ago when the Department of Interior rejected an environmental report prepared by the Warm Springs Tribes’ consultants because it failed to meet federal environmental laws. The department has ordered that the “purpose and need statement,” the fundamental cornerstone of any project being reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act, must be rewritten and that an on-reservation casino proposal must be analyzed. The Secretary of Interior has the ultimate authority to approve or deny off-reservation casino applications.

“The Department of Interior has sent the Tribe back to the drawing board and will require the Tribe to look for on-reservation sites for a new casino, said Peter Cornelison, Hood River resident and field representative for Friends. “This recent poll shows that Oregonians are in agreement with the Department of Interior and oppose an off-reservation reservation casino in the Gorge.”