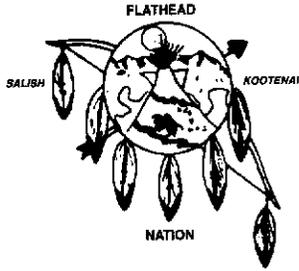


THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION



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EXHIBIT 4
DATE 2.10.05
HB 378



Joseph E. Dupuis - Executive Secretary
Vern L. Clairmont - Executive Treasurer
Leon Bourdon - Sergeant-at-Arms

February 10, 2005

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

D. Fred Matt - Chairman
Jami Hamel - Vice Chair
Carole Lankford - Secretary
Joel Clairmont - Treasurer
Lloyd D. Irvine
Mike Kenmille
Mary Lefthand
Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau
James Steele, Jr.
Ron Trahan

The Honorable George Golie, Chairman
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee
Room 152
Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Re: Tribal support for HB 378, a bill to equitably distribute fish and game funds between State and Tribal governments.

Dear Chairman Golie,

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation strongly support the purpose and intent of HB 378; sharing with Tribal governments federal excise taxes derived from the sale of hunting and fishing sporting goods. These taxes are assessed against Indian people, Indian businesses, Tribal governments and non-Indian people utilizing Tribal resources in the exact same way they are assessed against all others who purchase such sporting good items. Those taxes are then distributed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to state fish and game programs to support the good work of those departments.

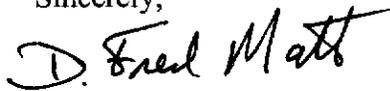
Tribal governments also operate fish and game programs throughout the Indian reservations in Montana, yet, to date have not been formally factored into the federal allocation of the taxes. Tribal and non-Tribal recreationists in Montana, both on and off Reservations, and Tribal governments contribute to these funds through the purchase of licenses and equipment as well as through the use of Tribal populations, water, and land base to calculate Montana's portion of the funding allocation. These Tribal resource numbers can make up a significant percentage of Montana's apportionment of the federal excise tax funds, which should be used for the benefit of all fish and game resources found within the State boundaries that are directly or indirectly being assessed these user taxes.

Tribal fish and game programs benefit natural resources both on the off Reservation land. For example, here on the Flathead Reservation, big game populations managed by our programs can migrate on and off the Reservation and be utilized by both Tribal and

non-Tribal hunters. The Tribes' management of these populations is completely funded from the Tribal budget and does not benefit from the federal excise taxes that augment Montana's management of big game animals. Similar examples arise when we look at upland bird, waterfowl, and fisheries management by our Tribes and the thousands of non-Tribal and Tribal bird hunters and anglers that use those resources without the benefit of excise taxes they may have paid. This seems unfair.

Unless HB 378 is enacted, fish and game management within a significant portion of the State will continue to be deprived an equitable portion of a resource benefit that it has paid to generate. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council urges passage of HB 378.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Fred Matt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "M".

D. Fred Matt, Tribal Chairman