

Stand Up For California!
“Citizens making a difference”

www.standupca.org

P. O. Box 355
Penryn, CA. 95663

MEDIA ALERT

Contact: Cheryl Schmit
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June 13, 2011

**Modern day western land grab
Indian tribes blockading private property**

PRESS CONFERENCE – JUNE 16, 10:30 A.M.

Many California Indian tribes have amassed substantial financial resources through their gaming interests, improving the lives of many residents. But the tribes’ accompanying political power is increasingly being used to take away rights of non-Indian private property owners.

This is not an isolated case but a growing trend across California.

About 40 disenfranchised property owners will be at the Riverside Courthouse Wednesday, June 16. They will tell their stories of how Indian tribes, in their quest for more casino-fueled power, are infringing upon private property rights.

This will be an emotional event since these folks are scared and frustrated because their property, lives, dreams and investments are on the line.

Lloyd Fields’ story in Banning is typical. The Morongo Tribe has blocked the only public road leading to his property, stripping it of nearly all of its value. (The blocked road is named after his Fields’ father – adding insult to injury.)

These property owners from throughout Riverside County are simply asking for fair treatment by local, state and federal officials to protect their legitimate interests and life-safety.

When: Thursday, June 16 at 10:30 a.m.

Where: Riverside County Court House at 4050 Main St. Parking is available on street and at the parking building on 3835 Twelfth St.

Who: Property owners and community groups who have been directly impacted by gaming tribes expanding their land bases, authority and jurisdiction over non-Indians. Group's include:

- **MorongolandGrab.com** (Impacted by Morongo Band of Mission Indians) is a group of five property owners who have had their properties blockaded or severely vandalized. The Morongo Tribe has offered property owners pennies on the dollar for their private property. Morongo has blockaded a public road within the City of Banning by building a guard shack preventing these property owners from freely accessing their land. Other property owners have had bullet holes shot through their homes, windows smashed, and property stolen and even worse. Learn more at www.MorongolandGrab.com or www.MorongosBlockadeDistroyandSteal.com.
- **Save Our Communities** (Impacted by the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians) this community of citizens is involved in complex concurrent federal processes initiated by the Soboba Band of Mission Indians in its quest to acquire an additional 600+ acres of land for a second casino. This acquisition will create three islands of non-Indian citizens living on Indian trust lands. This is a significant threat to their health, safety and well-being.
- **Colorado River Residents for Justice, Blythe Boat Club, West Bank Homeowners Association** (Impacted by the Colorado River Indian Tribes -CRIT) these citizens find themselves victims, in the middle of a dispute between the federal government, the CRIT and the State of California. The 17 miles along the river has been determined by the U.S. Supreme Court to be a "*disputed area*" that is yet to be resolved. Nevertheless, the CRIT are asserting authority and jurisdiction of tribal laws over non-Indian citizens and California lands.
- **Stand Up For California Stand Up For Californian** is a statewide organization with a focus on gambling issues affecting California, including tribal gaming, card clubs and the state lottery. We have been involved in the ongoing debate of issues raised by tribal gambling and its impacts for over a decade. Since 1996, we have assisted individuals, community groups, elected officials and members of law enforcement, local public entities and the State of California as respects to gaming impacts. We are recognized and act as a resource of information to local, state and federal policy makers.

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FACT SHEET
Expansion of Indian Trust Lands

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California tribes have approximately 137 fee-to-trust applications pending before the Pacific Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs affecting more than 15,000 acres of California lands that have never been in reservation or rancheria status.¹ The fee-to-trust process is broken and needs reform. Reform will prevent the social-cultural, economic and political impacts that are occurring statewide.

- Morongo (Banning area) – 8 applications totaling 682.16 acres
- Soboba (Hemet area) – 2 applications totaling 1,028.23 (creating three islands of non-Indian citizens within a reservation)
- Colorado River Indian Tribes (Blythe area) – asserting authority and jurisdiction over 17 miles of California lands and non-Indian citizens along of the Colorado River (the 17 miles are not in trust but owned by the Bureau of Reclamations – to gain reservation status the tribe will need a reservation patent.

Taking land out of state control creates significant impacts today and into the future.

- The taking of land into trust removes it from the regulatory authority of the state, interfering with smart planning and development programs of local governments and regional planning authorities to address sensitive environmental and growth issues and the equitable sharing of natural resources.
- The taking of land into trust results in the loss of state and local tax revenue on property and businesses previously subject to taxes, but now immune because it is located on federal trust lands. This affects the general funds of local governments to provide services to their constituents.
- Tribal governments, which often utilize law enforcement, fire and ambulance services but fail to contribute, drive up local government expenses while diminishing local government tax revenues.

¹ Link to [Dept. of Interior/Bureau of Indian Affairs list](#) This list covers some of the lands recently taken out of the authority of the State of California.

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Native American Campaign Contributions

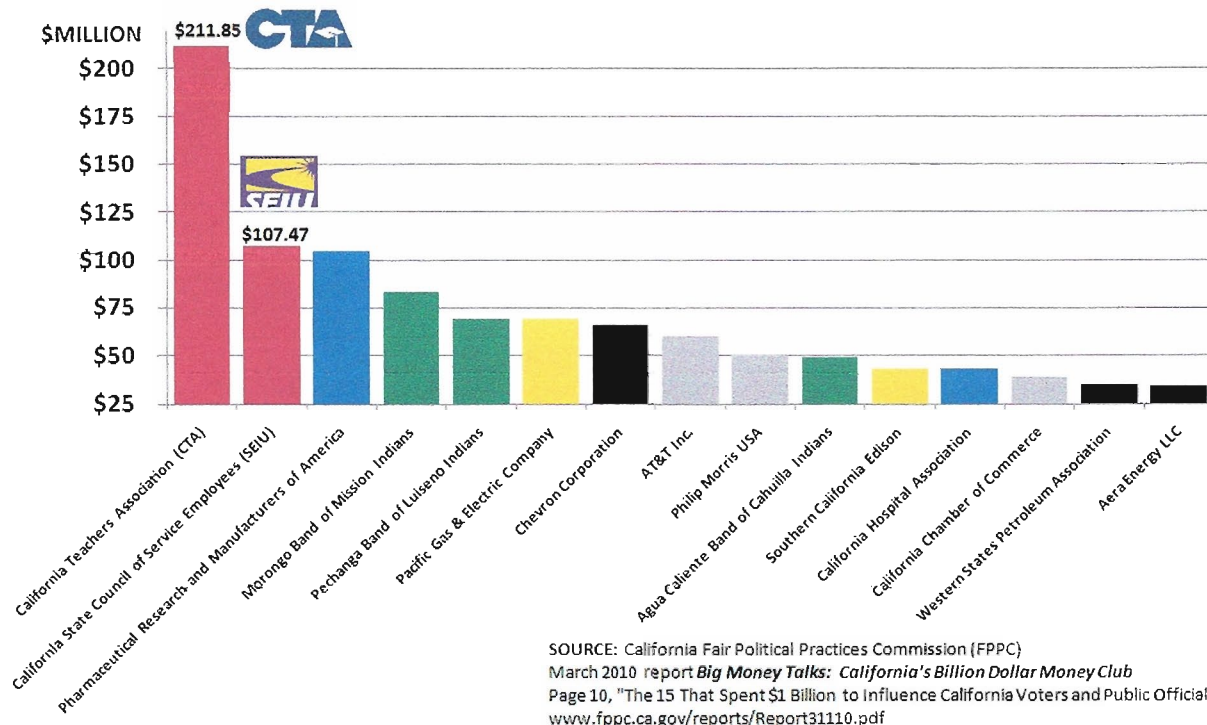
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Growing political clout – Since the initiation of Indian gaming in 1988, Native American tribes – particularly those in California – have become among the largest political campaign contributors in the state and the nation. The tribal interests driving this political activism include:

- Protection and expansion of tribes’ casino gambling operations.
- Gaining approval of land transfers from private holdings to Trust lands.
- Casino tribes are empire building.

Tribes among big spenders in California politics, 2000-2009¹

Three of the top 15 political campaign contributors in the state are tribes with gambling interests, with the Morongo Band the largest tribal contributor.



¹ Link to [California Fair Political Practices Commission](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/reports/Report31110.pdf) report

Stand Up California
Fact Sheet – Native American Political Contributions

California tribes, including the Morongo Band, are among the largest contributors to state and federal campaigns.² An analysis of the 2007 and 2008 campaign cycles by the Center for Responsive Politics found four of the top ten donors in the U.S. were tribes with interests in California.

- The Morongo Band of Mission Indians, the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians – all with gaming interests – and the tribally organized group Tribes for Fair Play were among the top 10 donors nationally.
- Their combined contribution of \$129.8 million is more than double that of the top national donor, the National Education Association (\$56.3 million)
- Three more California tribes with gambling interests were listed in the top 50 donors nationally.

² Link to [Indian Country Today](#)

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Background on organizations attending the June 16 Press Conference

Stand Up For Californian is a statewide organization with a focus on gambling issues affecting California, including tribal gaming, card clubs and the state lottery. We have been involved in the ongoing debate of issues raised by tribal gambling and its impacts for over a decade. Since 1996, we have assisted individuals, community groups, elected officials and members of law enforcement, local public entities and the State of California as respects to gaming impacts. We are recognized and act as a resource of information to local, state and federal policy makers.

Morongo Land Grab is a group of five property owners who have had their properties blockaded or severely vandalized. The Morongo Tribe has offered property owners pennies on the dollar for their private property. Morongo has blockaded a public road within the City of Banning by building a guard shack preventing these property owners from freely accessing their land. Other property owners have had bullet holes shot through their homes, windows smashed, and property stolen and even worse. Learn more at www.MorongoLandGrab.com or www.MorongosBlockadeDistroyandSteal.com.

Save Our Communities (SOC) is a group of citizens living in the City of San Jacinto and outlying areas including unincorporated Riverside County, who are directly affected by a proposed fee to trust acquisition of almost 600 acres of land by the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians for the purpose of the construction of a large commercial facility (casino, hotel, convention center, ancillary businesses) on land which would surround our light residentially zoned neighborhoods making us jurisdictional islands within Indian trust land. We urge our City of San Jacinto, the Riverside County Supervisors and Governor Brown to oppose this acquisition on the grounds that it will be detrimental to the health and safety of the citizens of our communities.

The West Bank Homeowners Association represents 400 families who own homes along a 17-mile strip of land beside the Colorado River in California. The land is characterized as disputed by the U.S. Supreme Court. Yet, the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) are attempting to remove all residents to remove challenges to the trust patent process that ultimately will result in them getting a casino in California. The Department of the Interior attempted to annex this strip of land to the reservation in 1969. Although the courts have agreed with California treating the reservation boundary as riparian and therefore the disputed area outside the reservation, the DOI refuses to acknowledge the Judicial Branch of the federal government or the State of California. The legislative branch of the federal government refuses to get involved even though it is their responsibility to determine Indian reservation boundaries. Meanwhile the residents are forced to fight it out with the Indians, resisting tribal court evictions, confiscation of homes and private property, destruction of homes and private property, deprivation of basic civil rights, and assault by tribal police. The West Bank Homeowners Association has been involved directly and indirectly in several lawsuits involving the disputed area.

Blythe Boat Club: Blythe Boat Club is a non-profit organization with 100 members and their families. We promote the safety of water sports and boating to local residents. This resort has been at its present location for over 63 years. We provide unlimited access to the river for the Riverside County Sheriff Department, Bureau of Reclamation, and Department of Fish and Game. The club has held a deed to the land and has the original California Deed of the prior owner. The Club like many of the residents along the River is seeking assistance from the County of Riverside to defend their civil rights against the bogus claims of reservation lands and the assertion of tribal police authority over non-Indian citizens.

Colorado River Residents for Justice is an action-oriented organization whose purpose is to vigorously protect our members' rights as afforded by the US Constitution and State and Federal Laws. We are pro-decision, pro-resolution and will fight to bring clarity and closure to the long-running and convoluted dispute concerning the western boundary of the Colorado River Indian Reservation. We do not wish to continue to spend our tax dollars returning time and again to state and federal courts to arrive at a non-decision. The time has come for a decision to be made. One way or the other, we will respect and support whatever decision is handed down; however, it needs to be fair and abide by existing US law.

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