

# SOC

## Save Our Communities

June 4, 2009

Honorable Byron L. Dorgan, Chairman  
Committee on Indian Affairs  
United States Senate  
Fax: (202) 224-1193

Honorable John Barrasso, Vice Chairman  
Committee on Indian Affairs  
United States Senate  
Fax: (202) 224-1724

Honorable Nick J. Rahall, Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resource  
United States House of Representatives  
Fax: (202) 225-9061

Honorable Dock Hastings, Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives  
Fax: (202) 225-5816

Re: Carcieri Fix Must Address California's Unique Issues

Dear Chairmen, Vice Chairman and Ranking Member:

A Carcieri Fix cannot be and is not only about tribal governments. Rather any Carcieri Fix must reflect reform of a process which restores the delicate balance of authorities between tribes, states and the federal government. Save Our Communities is motivated to write today because our community needs to know that our local officials and citizens have a say in the fee to trust process proposed by the Soboba Bank of Luiseño Indians in San Jacinto, California. California needs a programmatic policy that provides a meaningful, open and transparent process for all affected parties to participate.

Save Our Communities is a community group of civic minded homeowners and citizens. We have been organized since 2007. The citizens of Save Our Communities as elsewhere in the State have a heightened public interest to participate in the fee to trust process to protect the shared natural resources of our regional communities. Additionally to address the significant environmental and financial impacts associated with on reservation developments that create off reservation impacts negatively affecting the public's health and safety.

Save Our Communities is concerned about the fact that if the Soboba Tribe incorporates new land into its reservation for the purpose of gambling, there will be two islands of city land and one island of county land, all residential properties surrounded by reservation land. This is problematic for emergency services and for the administration of justice for our communities.

We are also concerned with the lack of cooperation of the Tribe with the communities, the City of San Jacinto and the Riverside County officials. Gun battles and crime has spilled over into our three communities immediately adjacent to the existing reservation and the Chairman has thwarted efforts to stem this criminal activity.

The Soboba Tribal government operates a successful casino. The Tribe has a small membership and distributes five-figure gambling compensation money to each member, each month. Over the last several years, Soboba has purchased more than 500 acres of land in the City of San Jacinto including a Country Club and golf course. For what reasoned need should Soboba be permitted to place in "trust" newly acquired lands? The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 was intended to tribes from losing land due to non-payment of taxes. Certainly it was not intended to help a tribe promote a land-grab, circumvent taxation and promote unfair competition to similar businesses in the surrounding area.

The purpose for land acquisition must be clearly stated in terms other than "we need to exercise sovereign power over the land". It would appear that the only purpose or need of the tribe is to circumvent local and state taxation and environmental standards that have been put in place to protect the scarce natural resources that we must all share. It appears the Tribe intends to use the social services of the community paid for by non-tribal citizen's tax dollars. Reform of the fee to trust process should take into consideration financial and environmental responsibility to the surrounding community.

We respectfully request that the "fee to trust" process include the following reforms:

- notification to all affected parties;
- access to the applications and necessary exhibits;
- a reasonable time period in which to respond; or,
- re-notice affected parties of a renewed application;
- a clearly stated purpose of land use; and
- reapplication if intended purpose is to change; and
- a reasoned and rational need for trust status

Sincerely,

Members of Save Our Communities

**Mission**

Save our Communities is opposed to the conversion of land from fee-to-trust and subsequent annexation to the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indian Reservation. We desire this land remain within it's current boundaries and jurisdictions and zoning.

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