



County of Sonoma  
State of California

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ATTEST: **JUL 29 2014**

VERONICA A. FERGUSON, Clerk/Secretary  
BY *[Signature]*  
DEPUTY CLERK/ASST SECRETARY

Date: July 29, 2014

Item Number: 15

Resolution Number: 14-0306

4/5 Vote Required

**Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California,  
Requesting Congress Hold Oversight Hearings On The Proposed Rule To The Federal Tribal  
Acknowledgment Process; And Expressing Opposition To The Proposed Rule's Impact on  
Input From County Government.**

**Whereas**, in response to criticisms that the existing federal recognition process for Indian Tribes is expensive, burdensome, opaque, and inflexible, the Department of Interior (DOI) released a Proposed Rule that would fundamentally alter the process; and

**Whereas**, the County of Sonoma respects the rights of Indian Tribes to seek federal acknowledgement and understands the importance to tribes of establishing that they have a special government-to-government relationship with the United States of America; and

**Whereas**, federal acknowledgment offers significant benefits to Indian Tribes, including the ability to have lands removed from local government regulatory jurisdiction and placed into trust status; and

**Whereas**, the acknowledgement process can be a precursor to Indian Tribes taking land into trust for gaming and other development projects, and therefore counties have an interest in the regulations governing decisions related to federal acknowledgement; and

**Whereas**, the Proposed Rule is complex and the significant changes it would make to the long-established rules governing tribal acknowledgment require an in-depth analysis; and

**Whereas**, California is home to 109 federally recognized tribes and the Proposed Rule could significantly increase the number of federally-recognized tribes, due to the 68 acknowledgment petitions from California Indian groups that are pending with the DOI; and

**Whereas**, the Proposed Rule would also allow previous denied petitioners, including six in California, an opportunity to re-petition under certain circumstances; and

**Whereas**, the Proposed Rule would alter the mandatory criteria, reduce periods of evaluation, and generally lessen the evidentiary standards for federal acknowledgement that have been in place for 36-years; and

**Whereas**, a recent report, "California Indian Petitioners and the Proposed Revisions of the Federal Acknowledgement Process," found that 34 California Indian Tribes could achieve federal recognition, which could lead to the development of an additional 22 Indian gaming facilities throughout the state; and

**Whereas**, the County of Sonoma is opposed to the provisions in the Proposed Rule that would greatly diminish the role of local governments in the federal recognition process, which has historically been to provide the DOI with crucial evidence which impacts acknowledgment decisions; and

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the County of Sonoma supports modifications to the current process to address legitimate concerns that it is too slow, expensive, burdensome, inefficient, intrusive, obscure and unpredictable, however, the changes must not compromise the integrity of the Bureau's decisions to recognize a group as an Indian tribe nor should it eliminate a county's voice in the federal acknowledgment process.

**Supervisors:**

Gorin: AYE

Zane: AYE

McGuire: AYE

Carrillo: AYE

Rabbitt: AYE

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

**So Ordered.**