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April 25, 2011

Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator  
Attn: Devin Rhinerson  
Senate Hart Building 331  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
FAX: (202) 228-3754

**RE: "Tribal Gaming Eligibility Act" SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Feinstein,

Dehesa Valley Community Council whole heartedly supports your "Tribal Gaming Eligibility Act". Please list our community group in support. We applaud your effort to put forward long needed public policy to resolve the *reservation shopping* issues in California. Whether phrased as new lands, after acquired lands, restored lands, or re-acquired lands or any land acquired after 1988, it does not matter. The voting public who supported the economic development of California's native people in 2000 with the passage of Proposition 1A now feel betrayed by the perceived broken promises of tribal government and gaming investors.

We were promised that Proposition 1A would be a limited exception to the prohibition on casino style-gaming and would not result in the proliferation of urban casinos. Yet today, California has more proposals than any other state. Off reservation casinos pose a serious threat to the tribal gaming industry, as public support that tribal governments enjoyed in 2000 is evaporating.

The vote on the 2007/08 compacts tell a story. While the 4 compacts passed, Sycuan was the least with only 54%. The cost to the Big Four Tribes was approximately 118 million dollars. The opposition spent a mere 24 million by comparison. Voter surveys showed a dead-heat until Governor Schwarzenegger in the last weeks of the campaign stated his support for the new compacts and claimed they would bring in millions of dollars to the empty coffers of the State general fund.

If we compare the 2008 vote to the 2000 vote in which 64% of the electorate voted for tribal gaming in which the proponents spent only 26 million dollars, that represents an almost 10% decrease in voter support in our area. Clearly voter support in 2008 was very expensive. In the immediate precincts surrounding the Sycuan Reservation, voters voted down the Sycuan compact. The surrounding community understood clearly the impact a second casino off reservation in our community would have.

Dehesa Valley Community Council is concerned about the continued fee-to-trust transactions of the Sycuan Band of Mission Indians here in East San Diego County. The most outrageous application has been for 1600 ac of land labeled as non-gaming. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Tribe in its 2007/08 compact designated the land for gaming. The land is contiguous and thus a potential exception for gaming. A few years ago, the tribe acquired contiguous lands again labeled non-gaming. The land became the sight of a 5 story parking garage an amenity to the casino and clearly should have been processed in accordance with the 1999 tribal state compact requirements, but did not. The Tribe has a history of *bait and switch fee to trust transactions*. Are we now to believe the Tribe will not game on the 1600 ac. still in the fee-to-trust process? Our community is not even certain where this application is in the federal process due to the lack of transparency surrounding this failed agency system.

Sycuan does not have a local agreement to mitigate impacts for traffic or other social services with the County of San Diego. This is a serious and costly impact that threatens the health and safety of the general public which includes the Tribes patrons and employees.

Dehesa Valley Community Council supports your legislation as it is a beginning and necessary step in the right direction. However, we encourage you to continue to seek significant reform of the fee-to-trust process to prevent all tribes from the *bait and switch activity* which creates casinos and casino amenities, while failing to mitigate the impacts on the local and regional areas.

You have our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Riggs". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Patricia Riggs  
Dehesa Valley Community Council