



TRIBAL ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN INDIAN NATIONS

April 25, 2012

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
Senate President Pro Tempore
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Rod Wright
State Senator
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS:

AGUA CALIENTE BAND
OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

AUGUSTINE BAND OF
MISSION INDIANS

CAHUILLA BAND
OF INDIANS

CHEMEHUEVI INDIAN
TRIBE

PECHANGA BAND OF
LUISEÑO INDIANS

SAN MANUEL BAND OF
MISSION INDIANS

SANTA ROSA BAND OF
MISSION INDIANS

SANTA YNEZ BAND OF
CHUMASH INDIANS

SOBOBA BAND OF
LUISEÑO INDIANS

RE: SB 1463 – Oppose Unless Amended

Dear President Pro Tempore Steinberg and Senator Wright:

The Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations (TASIN), an intergovernmental association of nine federally recognized tribal governments throughout Southern California, is strongly opposed to SB 1463 (Wright/Steinberg) as introduced on February 24, 2012. As written, the bill is deeply flawed and undermines tribal sovereignty and the progress toward self-sufficiency that California tribal governments have achieved since voters overwhelmingly supported Indian gaming in 1998, 2000 and 2008.

Our opposition to this bill is rooted in its fundamental disregard for the unique government-to-government relationship between the State and California's tribal governments. Although there are differences of opinion among our member tribal governments and broader Indian Country as to how to proceed with Internet gaming, TASIN is united in its opposition to SB 1463, as written.

California tribal governments have made considerable progress over the last decade. In order to reach consensus, we believe enabling legislation must provide as much stability for the future as possible. Several provisions of your bill would, in the long run, have a significantly destabilizing impact on our brick and mortar businesses. TASIN is also united in our deep concerns over the following key tenets of your bill:

- Sovereignty - Tribal sovereignty must always be respected, thus the requirement for a blanket waiver of tribal sovereign immunity, as proposed by your bill, is unacceptable.
- Eligibility – Good public policy would limit a license for an Internet poker site to the entities and tribal governments presently authorized by federal and state law to offer poker games within their brick and mortar facilities.
- Scope of gaming – Expansion of games beyond poker after two years is not acceptable. A bill must be limited to poker-only.
- Exclusivity – Tribes insist that the State Legislature not violate voter-approved compacts and rights and that legislation not be a precursor to expanded gaming over the Internet.

We have seen other segments of the California gaming industry seek to expand the scope of gaming in the State and are deeply concerned with the prospect of the expansion of gaming over the Internet going forward.


- Fees – We believe the license fees and structure of enabling legislation must be equitable and rational in order for California’s brick and mortar gaming businesses to succeed. Modification of a license’s terms after three years does not provide the type of stability necessary to achieve the goals of authorization.

Accordingly, TASIN is unable to support SB 1463 unless significantly amended to address our many concerns. We encourage the Legislature to continue to be deliberate and judicious about authorization of Internet gambling. We share your goal of ensuring that the outcome is beneficial for the State, Tribal Governments, and the people of California.

Very Truly Yours,


ANDREW MASIEL, SR.
TASIN Vice Chairman


ROSEMARY MORILLO
TASIN Treasurer


GERALD CLARK, JR.
TASIN Secretary

cc: The Honorable Jerry Brown
Members of the California Legislature
California Tribal Governments