

Stand Up For California!

“Citizens making a difference”

www.standupca.org

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TO: All California State Senators and Assembly Members

DATE: June 7, 2017

Stand Up For California writes today to oppose AB 653. Responsible legislation requires balancing the authorities and rights of the tribal and non-tribal communities, local, state and federal government. AB 653 does not meet this standard.

Ostensibly AB 653 seeks to resolve a housing crisis on tribal lands and instead creates the unintended consequence of a tax exemption for gaming investor, Boyd Gaming of Nevada, to avoid paying taxes to the City of Elk Grove. Land for which Boyd Gaming paid 35 million dollars and the Wilton Tribe contributed 1 million dollars.


Unfortunately the Santa Ynez Chumash and the Wilton Tribe both received after hour approvals from Principal Deputy Secretary Larry Roberts. Mr. Roberts lacked the authority to make final agency decisions for the taking of land into trust or for determining restored lands. ***Neither the land at the Ghost Mall in Elk Grove or the 1400 acres of land in Santa Ynez has completed the fee-to-trust process.*** The trust decisions are in “limbo” awaiting the review of newly confirmed Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

AB 653 interferes with the ability of local government and tribes to interact and negotiate meaningful intergovernmental agreements designed to promote and enhance working relationships thereby keeping communities unified. AB 653 will place a tax burden on the scarce tax dollars of local government affecting social services that the neediest of citizens often depend upon.

While the recent amendment to AB 653 attempted to improve the language of the bill it still instructs the tax assessor to take the land off of the tax rolls and out of the regulatory authority of the State prior to completion of the federal process. **The land is not accepted into trust until the decision is “published in the Federal Register”.** Thus, AB 653 takes land off of the tax rolls before it is in trust.

There is no real effect to this bill other than to change the bargaining position of the two sides, taking away the already limited options of local government and gifting tribes with mandated leverage.

Sincerely,



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