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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

November 6, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20241

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I am writing to make you aware of my strong opposition to the Department of Interior modifying or interpreting its administrative regulations to accommodate or implement the practice of off-reservation gaming. It is my understanding that the Department is reviewing its policies related to the federal acquisition of lands taken into trust for Indian gaming purposes and that this would include lands located in areas not contiguous and unrelated to traditional reservation boundaries.

As you know, there has been a significant increase in recent years with the number of Tribes seeking to acquire lands to build off-reservation casinos. This is occurring as much here in San Diego County as it is in areas throughout the nation. I firmly believe these efforts are contrary to the underlying purpose of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), which was designed to encourage reservation-based economic development and the creation of local jobs for tribal communities. These efforts are a concern not only to me and my constituents, but also to several other Members of Congress and a large number of Indian Tribes across the country.

The Department's current interpretation of IGRA appears to allow for off-reservation gaming activity. As I have indicated, I disagree with this policy and believe a review and clarification is warranted. I respectfully recommend that regulations be created and implemented that bring about a less ambiguous federal land acquisition policy as it pertains to Indian gaming, one that strictly prohibits this activity from occurring in off-reservation locations.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this request and I look forward to working with you on this important matter. If you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, or have your staff contact Michael Harrison in my office at (619) 448-5201.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duncan Hunter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

DH/mrh