



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

APR 29 2016

The Honorable Patricia Hermosillo
Chairwoman, Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians
555 South Cloverdale Boulevard, Suite A
Cloverdale, California 95425

Dear Chairwoman Hermosillo:

In 2008, the Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians (Tribe) submitted an application to the Department of the Interior (Department) to acquire in trust approximately 62 acres of land in contiguous to its original 27.5 acre reservation. As a result of the United States' repugnant and failed termination policy, which has since been repudiated, the Tribe was terminated. Termination severed the government-to-government relationship and, except for the Tribe's cemetery and tribal well, resulted in the loss of the Tribe's lands. Indeed, some of the Tribe's original tribal lands were sold to the State of California and are now used for State Highway 101.

In 1983, the United States corrected history and restored its federal government-to-government relationship with the Tribe. Thirty-three years later, the repudiated termination still impacts the Tribe as it has no trust land to call home. That changes today. Pursuant to Section 5 of the Indian Reorganization Act, 25 U.S.C. §465, the application is approved, and these restored lands will now be held in trust for the Tribe.

The reasons for our decision are reflected in the attached analysis and follow a thorough review of the Tribe's history and application, the administrative record, and comments submitted by numerous interested parties. The Department also developed an Environmental Impact Statement, which 1) included an in-depth analysis of potential impacts from the proposed casino/resort and 2) required mitigation measures to address potential impacts.

Although the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) generally prohibits gaming activities on lands acquired in trust by the United States on behalf of a tribe after October 17, 1988, an exception is made for lands that are acquired in trust as part of the "restoration of lands for an Indian tribe that is restored to Federal recognition." 25 U.S.C. § 2719 (b)(1)(B)(iii). We have determined that the lands under our review meet the restored lands exception of IGRA and are eligible for gaming.

This decision to restore tribal homelands for the Tribe will set a course to promote the current Federal policies of tribal self-determination and self-governance. According to the Tribe, approximately 25 percent of tribal families are either in poverty or low-income and in need of housing or housing assistance.

The Tribe endured a long and rigorous process to restore a land base. As a result of this acquisition, the Tribe will be positioned to achieve long-term and stable economic development, which will provide employment opportunities for tribal members. Revenue from economic development will greatly enhance the Tribe's ability to promote the health and safety of its citizens. Increased revenue will also contribute to and enhance educational and cultural programs, and increase services available to tribal members.

The decision to acquire this land in trust for the Tribe implements IGRA's direction to place those tribes that endured termination on an equal footing with tribes that were not subject to that harsh Federal policy. We thank the Tribe, other interested parties, and the public for their engagement throughout this process with our staff to make this decision.

Sincerely,



Lawrence S. Roberts

Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs