

LOS COYOTES BAND



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Los Coyotes Barstow Casino Project Moves Forward

Bureau of Indian Affairs Issues Draft Environmental Impact Statement

(Warner Springs, CA.) — The approval process for the Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeño Indians to develop an Indian gaming facility in Barstow is advancing to the next step. The Department of the Interior (DOI) today published a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Federal Register, initiating an official 75-day public comment period.

“We just completed the most extensive portion of the process necessary to take land into trust,” said Los Coyotes spokesman Shane Chapparosa. “This marks a huge step forward for the Tribe, and for Barstow. For the past ten years, we have worked with Barstow, California and DOI officials to follow the procedure traditionally used by tribes to obtain land for off-reservation gaming to bring viable economic development to both of our communities.”

The proposed \$160 million Los Coyotes Barstow development is projected to create more than 1,065 construction jobs and more than 1,000 permanent jobs for the city of Barstow and surrounding areas. This includes 823 jobs at the facility and 262 jobs that will be created as a result of the casino construction and operation.

As proposed, the casino resort would include:

- 57,000 square feet of gaming floor space
- 1,325 slot machines
- 57 table games
- 100-room hotel
- conference/meeting room space
- dining and entertainment options

“The city of Barstow is very encouraged by this long awaited step forward,” said Barstow City councilman Tim Silva. “This project is critical to revitalizing our local economy. It will provide jobs and a real economic boost to our community.”

Located on I-15, the main highway from Southern California to Las Vegas, the casino would primarily capture revenues that are currently going to Nevada – adding jobs that would be new and additional to California.

The draft EIS evaluates the potential environmental, social, economic and public service impacts of the casino proposal. The EIS is required for the federal government’s review of the Tribe’s pending land-into-trust applications.

The draft EIS will be used to create a final document, which will incorporate written public comments sent to the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs as well as comments made at a public hearing in Barstow. The public hearing will be held on July 27 at Barstow Community College.

The Los Coyotes Band and the City of Barstow began pursuing an off-reservation casino in 2001. In 2004, Los Coyotes and the City of Barstow signed one of the most generous Municipal Agreements in California, providing for a 4.3 percent revenue sharing agreement with the City. It is estimated the City would receive more than \$4 million from the first year of the casino's operations.

The Tribe began working with DOI on the land-into-trust process and filed its formal application in March of 2006. The Los Coyotes Band responded to new standards set by DOI, and submitted a revised request in 2008. In its application, the Tribe asked the Department take a 23-acre parcel of land in Barstow into federal trust, and that it issue a "two-part determination" that doing so would benefit both the Tribe and the surrounding community.

While the EIS phase moves forward, the Los Coyotes Band plans to begin negotiations on a new compact.

"Four years ago when we asked the California Legislature to approve our previous gaming compact, signed by Gov. Schwarzenegger, we were asked to go to Washington and get our land put into trust first, and then come back to Sacramento to work on the gaming compact," said Chapparosa. "We look forward to working together toward a new gaming compact with Gov. Jerry Brown for the Legislature's consideration."

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.barstowcasinoproject.com>

-30-

About the Los Coyotes Band

The Los Coyotes Band's reservation is located in the remote mountainous area of northern San Diego County – surrounded on three sides by national forests. Electricity was brought to the edge of the reservation less than 10 years ago, and because of its remote location, rugged terrain and limited infrastructure, the reservation generally is unsuitable for significant economic development. For this reason, there are no viable employment opportunities and less than 20% of the tribe's members live on the reservation. Currently there are 328 members enrolled in the Los Coyotes Band. The majority of tribal members are dispersed over southern California

Background

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) specifically allows a federally recognized tribe to engage in gaming on trust land acquired after 1988 if the Department of the Interior determines that it would be beneficial to the tribe and not detrimental to the surrounding community, and the Governor concurs in the Department's determination. This "Two-Part Determination" exception allows a tribe with a reservation not conducive to viable economic development to develop a casino off the reservation, so long as the tribe can show that the proposed gaming development would be in the best interest of the tribe and its members, and would not be detrimental to the surrounding community.