



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

March 9, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

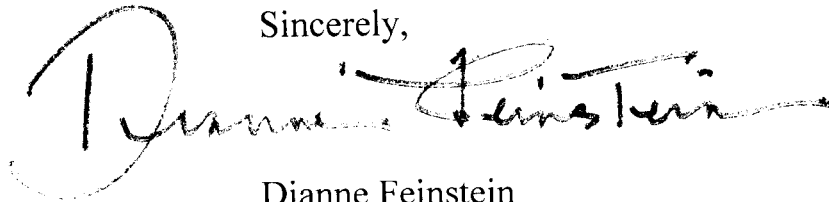
I write to inquire about the status of the delinquent report from your Department on the supposed “strong local support” for the two off-reservation casino projects in California you approved last September. I am deeply disappointed that the Department has failed to provide Congress this critical information within the congressionally mandated 60-day window.

The consequences of casino development on Indian lands extend far beyond a reservation’s borders. For this reason the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires the Department to consult with local officials and neighboring tribal governments prior to approving two-part determination projects. As required by law, your Department consulted a total of 33 local officials and governing bodies before issuing the September 1, 2011 decisions; and according to your Department’s own records, only three of these entities expressed support for the projects. Despite this lack of support—and even in the face of a countywide vote opposing the project in one case—your Department claimed that the casinos had “strong local support” and approved their construction.

On page 1064 of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2055, the omnibus appropriations bill, the Committee requests a review of the Department’s work to “verify the claim of strong local support.” The Committee also directs you to provide Congress with a report on your findings within 60 days. This deadline has come and gone, so I call on you to immediately release your findings so that Californians can be confident that their opinions, and the opinions of their local officials, are considered as a part of the Department’s decision-making process.

The report to Congress is now over two weeks late and further delay is unacceptable. I look forward to reviewing your report soon and working with you to ensure that community input is given all due consideration when approving or denying new casinos. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF:dr