



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA

MADERA COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
200 WEST FOURTH STREET / MADERA, CALIFORNIA 93637
(559) 675-7700 / FAX (559) 673-3302 / TDD (559) 675-8970

RECEIVED SEP 27 2011

TOM WHEELER
SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 5

September 27, 2011

The Honorable Jerry Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

As District 5 Supervisor for Madera County, I am writing to enlist your support of the North Fork Casino Project. I understand that you were contacted by Senator Dianne Feinstein in a September 23, 2011 letter that requested you reject the North Fork Rancheria's gaming proposal. I find this request disconcerting as I wholeheartedly agree with the Department of Interior's determination that the project would not be detrimental to the surrounding community.

In fact, I firmly believe that Madera County would benefit from this much-needed economic opportunity. As you may be aware, Madera County suffers from an unemployment rate of 14.4 percent, well above the State's rate of 11.9 percent. In addition to its high unemployment rate, our County also faces increased foreclosures, poverty, and an overall lack of new business coming to the area. The proposed casino project will create nearly 5,000 total jobs, including 2,441 during the construction phase and 2,319 during the operations phase. Additionally, it will create 1,500 permanent facility jobs and nearly 2,000 non-casino jobs in the community. It will also establish a strong industrial base for investment as well as \$45-50 million in goods and services purchased annually, with much of that spent locally. The nearly \$100 million in annual economic activity is desperately needed and is anything but "short term" as Senator Feinstein contends in her letter.

Senator Feinstein also states that local government and public services will be impacted by the proposed casino. Although this statement may be correct, she fails to mention the multi-million dollar Memorandum of Understanding the County entered into with the North Fork Rancheria in 2004. The MOU provides that the Tribe contribute approximately \$87 million to the County over 20 years to fund police, fire and emergency services and to mitigate potential impacts. The MOU also establishes \$4 million in community funding to invest in local charitable causes, education and economic development. The North Fork Rancheria also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Madera and the Madera Irrigation District to mitigate any possible impacts.

Not only will the MOUs specify mitigation measures for significant impacts but so will the final Environmental Impact Statement. From the very beginning, the North Fork Rancheria has been open and willing to work with local jurisdictions to identify potential impacts and find agreeable solutions. Their proposal has had seven years of review and analysis. Additionally, it has been carefully vetted through numerous public hearings sponsored by both the County and the North Fork Rancheria.

It is also concerning that Senator Feinstein asserts that there is a lack of support of the Casino Project. In addition to the thousands of individual support letters the North Fork Rancheria has received, the majority of the Madera County Supervisors have also voiced their support. Most members of the Board of Supervisors, including myself, have written multiple letters to the Administration in favor of the project and Supervisor Frank Bigelow even travelled to Washington,

D.C., to testify before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Furthermore, in 2005 the Board approved a resolution supporting the concept of the proposed Casino Project.

In closing, it's important to note that all levels of government have expended taxpayer dollars in the preparation and review of project materials. Unnecessary further delay in the process would be unfair to taxpayers. It is also unfair to the Tribe and its more than 1,900 tribal citizens who continue to incur significant interest expenses with each passing month.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge you to concur with the Assistant Secretary's favorable two-part decision and immediately move this project forward for the betterment of Madera County and the entire San Joaquin Valley region.

Respectfully,

Tom Wheeler
Supervisor, District 5

Cc: Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Honorable Tom Berryhill
Honorable Kristin Olsen
Honorable Anthony Cannella
Honorable Linda Halderman
North Fork Rancheria