

September 8, 2009

Mike Thompson  
United States Congressman  
First District of California  
317 3rd Street, Suite 1  
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Bear River Casino Expansion

Dear Congressman Thompson

The purpose of this letter is to urgently request your support in opposing a casino expansion plan by the Bear River Casino. The Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria plans to fill a wetland and extend a parking lot adjacent to and running the entire length of my property line within a few feet of my back yard and residence.

This is gross environmental degradation and blatant disregard for an adjacent neighbor. The environmental evaluation, prepared by consulting firm Analytical Environmental Service (AES), contains no mitigation for me. In fact, I could find no mention of the wetland or my residence in the "environmental evaluation" that purports the project has no significant environmental impact.

To make matters worse the "environment evaluation" proposes to extend a wastewater leach field under the existing upper parking lot which is adjacent to my shallow well and home drinking water source. No mention is made of any off-site impact or the existence of my well.

This lack of mitigation and acknowledgement of impacts appears to be a deliberate retaliation against me since AES and the tribe are both well aware of my presence. The casino failed to put up an 8-foot block wall along our common property line per their own casino environmental evaluation in 2004. This evaluation was also written by AES.

To date, the tribe has provided no voluntary off-site mitigation that wasn't forced on them by what little legal recourse is available to non-tribal citizens. And what little mitigation I fought for (a privacy sound wall and landscape screening) will be removed per the parking lot expansion drawing.

The casino has not diverted traffic from driving through our neighborhood, despite it being a condition of their alcohol license. After three years of non-compliance with this condition, an administrative law judge recently ordered them to do so. Rather than comply, the tribe is appealing that decision.

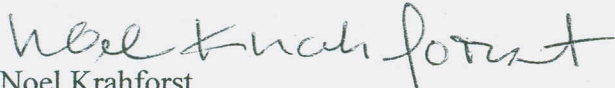
This latest casino project includes a hotel and expansion of the existing casino, as well as the wetland parking lot and wastewater drain field along my 300 foot property line. Traffic from the hotel and casino expansion will be added to existing 24/7 casino traffic and the recently completed casino gas station. Plans for an RV park have been drawn up and the tribe has been

soliciting bids for a HUD housing project. All this without mitigation! All this in violation of the tribe's 1999 compact with the State of California requiring a good faith effort to mitigate off-reservation impacts!

Lastly, I have made every effort to sell my home and move; and recently received an offer from a party who did not object to the present location of the casino and parking. Once the environmental evaluation was disclosed, they immediately withdrew their offer. I have included their comments and a letter from the EPA regarding the wetland, as well as a number of documents from the tribe's own consultants and others including a statistical crime and law enforcement report detailing the frequency and nature of responses along Singley Rd. and at the Casino since its opening in 2005.

In short, my home has been devalued by the tribe and I can't sell it and I won't be able to live here. I will be subjected to 300 feet, 6 rows deep of car lights facing my home, parking lot floodlights, car doors, car alarms, 24/7 traffic, crime and strangers. My well water is threatened and LACO engineering has already marked trees along the property line that will need to be removed to fill in the wetland for parking.

Some pro-casino legislators might euphemistically refer to this as "tribal sovereignty" or "tribal economic development" but this is special interest corruption and political "don't look to me" on land paid for with my tax dollars for HUD tribal housing. That housing continues to be displaced for casino expansion and replaced with new tribal HUD housing elsewhere - again with my tax dollars. This letter, with the environmental issues it calls attention to, is meant to be part of the record of comments solicited as part of the environmental evaluation.

  
Noel Krahforst  
525 Singley Rd.  
Loleta, CA 95551

c: Leonard Bowman, Tribal Chairman Rohnerville Rancheria  
Jason Brush/ Melissa Scianni USEPA Region 9  
Andrea Hoch, Legal Secretary Governor's Office  
Steve Hardy, Director Alcohol Beverage Control  
Lisa P. Jackson, EPA Administrator  
Cheryl Schmit, Director Stand Up For California  
Jimmy Smith, Humboldt County Supervisor