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Dear Constituents,

I am writing to express my views on the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians' Camp Four Project. I have not taken a position for or against the project, but I have plenty of opinions about it and its future. I agreed to participate at a recent Chumash-sponsored event so that I could learn more about the proposal and also help affect the dialogue.

I believe strongly in the power of participation and believed that this would be a way to work together to achieve a common ground. I have reviewed countless land-use applications in my career and what I have learned is the importance of collaboration. When dealing with complex, controversial projects, it is very difficult to affect the outcome from the outside.

As a lifelong preservationist, I certainly don't want to see the Santa Ynez Valley lose any more of its natural beauty. A multitude of development projects over the last few decades have impacted the Valley and changed its course.

I would never support a new casino in the Valley. Ideally the Camp 4 site would remain rural open space.

The Chumash are indicating that they would use the 1,400 acres to provide housing for tribal members who would like to live under the tribal government. The community must be willing to sit at the table with the tribe and express their concerns about the project. The Chumash should also be willing to come to the table to listen to the community's important perspective.

At this time, the Chumash have several options to pursue their goal of building housing on Camp 4. They can choose to go through the County process, annex the land by the BIA process or directly through legislation. I have opposed the idea of legislation and I hope that they will choose the option that best involves the entire community.

We know from experience that land that historically belonged to a tribe is usually approved by the federal government. It's clear that the size of the property in question is an important detail to consider. My office is currently researching whether previous Fee-to-Trust transitions have been on a scale of 1,400 acres.

What I do know is that we need to work together.

No one will win if either side digs in its heels and refuses to listen to the other. In this context, here are my goals:

- I believe the project should go through the county planning process to ensure maximum public participation. This Santa Ynez Valley belongs to all of us. We all should be heard.

- I want the tribe to preserve as much open space as possible.

My office has no authority over this project. I believe we should work together as a community to seek the best common goal for all of our Valley residents. Together we have strength and power to minimize any potential development impacts, while still respecting and understanding the goals and needs of the Chumash Tribe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Das Williams', written in a cursive style.

DAS WILLIAMS
Assemblymember, 37th District