



March 18, 2011

*Santa Ynez
Valley Alliance*

The Honorable Elton Gallegly
Member of Congress
2309 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0513

Dear Congressman Gallegly:

In October of 2009, Santa Barbara County adopted the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, a regional planning document that guides development, assures the provision of services, and provides policy direction for the Santa Ynez Valley. The Plan reflects almost ten years of research, outreach, two million dollars of public expenditure, and extensive hearings and citizen testimony.

Valley residents are therefore understandably shocked to hear that less than a year and a half after its adoption, the Santa Ynez Band of the Chumash has asked for a federal legislative process to be initiated on their behalf to unilaterally remove from the purview of the Plan, the jurisdiction of Santa Barbara County, and the county tax rolls, the "Camp 4" property.

The 1,400 acre property, purchased by the Tribe in April of 2010, is currently zoned for agriculture and is conspicuously located in the heart of the Valley at the juncture of two highways. Adding insult to injury is the fact that the debate on this proposal will occur in Washington, D.C., 2,784 miles distant, and is driven by special interests.

The Santa Ynez Valley Alliance is writing to express its dismay that our national legislative process could possibly be abused in such a manner. Irrespective of the property's ownership, this proposal flies in the face of good government and purposely circumvents the authority of local jurisdictions. There is no clear overwhelming national public benefit that would warrant such an intrusion of federal authority into the purview of local governance and rural America.

The economic distress of tribal communities during the Great Depression resulted in the creation of the existing Fee-to-Trust process in 1934, but it was predicated on "need," which is clearly not the situation affecting the Tribe in the Santa Ynez Valley. With more than 250 million dollars in annual revenue and multiple large property holdings, the Tribe enjoys substantial economic prosperity.

The Tribe purchased this property subject to local controls, regulations and taxation. Like their neighbors, they should work through the existing County land use process when considering development. In return, they will share in the provision of public services provided by local jurisdictions.



Removing this land from the tax rolls would come at a great cost to the county at a time it can ill afford to lose revenues. The missing revenues would directly affect public services and school systems which the Tribe ironically benefits from without charge. Their tax responsibilities would thus be shifted onto the backs of others.

Finally, any process that seeks to remove this property from local governance should be open and transparent, consider all impacts to the entire community and give local citizens ample opportunity to comment in a meaningful way.

The Santa Ynez Valley Alliance works collaboratively with individuals, groups and governments to protect the rural character of the Santa Ynez Valley and support good stewardship of natural and agricultural resources through education, comprehensive planning and public participation.

The Valley Alliance strongly urges you to reject any effort to initiate this legislative process.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Mark Oliver
President

cc: Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Congresswoman Lois Capps
Assemblyman Das Williams
Santa Barbara Salud Carbajal
Santa Barbara Supervisor Janet Wolf
Santa Barbara Supervisor Doreen Farr
Santa Barbara Supervisor Joni Gray, Chair
Santa Barbara Supervisor Steve Lavagnino
Santa Barbara County CEO Chandra Waller
Chairman Vincent Armenta, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians