



CALIFORNIA TRIBAL
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

August 15, 2006

Honorable Roy Ashburn
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Ashburn:

In Sunday's Desert Sun, you were quoted as saying, "The reason the Barstow compact is being held is that those tribes that have casinos that are already sanctioned by the state want to keep it for themselves. They really don't want others in this."

I am writing on behalf of the six member tribes of the California Tribal Business Alliance to make sure you are aware of the real reasons our tribes oppose off-reservation casinos – reasons that have nothing to do with business competition or keeping the benefits of tribal gaming to ourselves.

First, none of our six tribal casinos would face any competition from a tribal gaming complex at Barstow. We did not either individually or through CTBA oppose legislative ratification of the Big Lagoon and Los Coyotes compacts. And we are sympathetic to these two tribes' desire for economic development to improve the lives of their members.

However, we believe that allowing a tribe to extend its jurisdiction hundreds of miles from its traditional homeland causes irreversible erosion to tribal sovereignty and tribal governmental jurisdiction. The recognized territory of a tribe has historical and cultural significance, and it is a key element in the legal basis for a tribe's sovereign authority over its land and people. Tribes that abandon that jurisdictional foundation are giving up an essential ingredient of sovereignty – territoriality.

If some tribes are willing to voluntarily leave behind their traditional homelands, it will become more difficult to defend tribes against being forced from their lands against their will, as has happened many times in the not-so-distant past. Furthermore, when these tribes move, they end up in another tribe's homeland, compromising that tribe's sovereign authority and cultural identity. We also believe that moving tribes from their traditional homelands, whatever the reason, undermines public support for the gaming franchise voters awarded tribes through Proposition 1A in 2000 and violates the pledge made by tribes that gaming would take place only on tribal lands.



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So to argue that tribal opposition to off-reservation casinos is purely anti-competitive politics suggests that you view tribes as just another business, and not as sovereign governments rooted in the territory of their people, governments that must endure and meet the needs of their people through the generations.

We want to make sure that you are aware that there are much broader issues at stake when off-reservation casinos are proposed, and that the views of tribes expressing concerns with these proposals are not cast in a dismissive or belittling context.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bobby Barrett", written over a horizontal line.

Bobby Barrett, Chairman
Board of Directors
California Tribal Business Alliance

cc: Assembly Member Jerome Horton
Assembly Member Dennis Mountjoy