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CALIFORNIA TRIBAL
BUSINESS ALLIANCE
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July 22, 2005

Representative Richard Pombo, Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo:

I am writing on behalf of the six member tribes of the California Business Alliance to urge you to delay consideration of language in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that would undermine the property rights of California Indian tribes.

The language in question would allow the judgment of a non-Indian hydropower licensee to be substituted for that of the Secretary of the Interior on licensing conditions adequate for the protection and utilization of natural resources on an Indian reservation.

Two of our member tribes, the Pala Band of Mission Indians and the Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians, fought in court alongside the United States government for 15 years to gain this protection. Yet, this language is to be discussed and possibly adopted by the Energy Policy Act conferees in the next few days with no hearings on its adverse impact on Indians by the House Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction in this matter.

These amendments to federal law would delegate the responsibility to protect Indian property rights to a non-governmental entity that has an interest opposed to that of tribes, and we urgently request you to pull the language for further consideration by your committee.

Sincerely,

Paula Lorenzo, Chairwoman
California Tribal Business Alliance

cc: California Energy Policy Act of 2005 Conferees