

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Secretary Kempthorne,

Last week, Governor Schwarzenegger signed gaming compacts with two California tribes. Since the Department of the Interior has yet to take the proposed parcel into trust for the purposes of gaming, we wanted to again state our opposition to off-reservation gaming.

Taking off-reservation lands into trust for gaming operations continues a dangerous practice for the future of our states. New casinos would impair local communities, area residents, local governments, and other Native American tribes, and impact the environment, air quality, noise levels, and quality of life. In light of the significant impact of the 57 existing Indian casinos in California, we do not support the Interior Department taking more off-reservation land into trust for gaming.

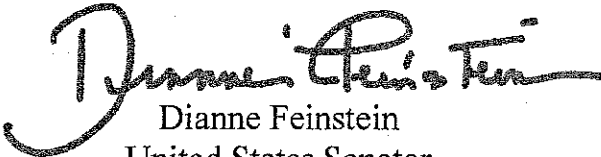
On January 3, 2008, the Department of the Interior issued guidance on taking off-reservation lands into trust for the purposes of Indian gaming. The Department's guidelines require greater scrutiny with respect to the distance between the identified parcel and existing reservation lands and place a greater emphasis on state and local concerns and potential jurisdictional and tax concerns should land be taken into trust, without diminishing the previously established requirements that an application must adhere to. We support the principles articulated in the Department's guidance document, and trust you will apply them when considering the applications before you.

We continue to be concerned with the insufficient oversight of existing casinos, and believe these should be addressed before new casinos are established. In the absence of established State regulations and with only five investigators and two auditors for the National Indian Gaming Commission's California and Northern Nevada regional office to maintain the integrity of these gaming operations, expansion into off-reservation gaming is inopportune and irresponsible. California's Indian gaming operations raised almost \$8 billion in revenue in 2006, and we support the commitment of additional resources and efforts to monitor existing operations before any new casinos are considered.

These new agreements put the future of gaming in California on a slippery slope, and we urge you to consider the full consequences of taking land into trust for gaming purposes as you consider these applications.

If you have any questions regarding this issue or would like to further discuss the matter, please do not hesitate to contact us. Best regards.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Harry Reid
United States Senator