



July 22, 2011

*Santa Ynez
Valley Alliance*

DIRECTORS

DOUGLAS BRADLEY
JOE DUGAN
LANSING DUNCAN
GAIL MARSHALL
SHELLEY LANE
MARK OLIVER
WARD RAFFERTY, JR.
DONNA WILL

Honorable Elton Gallegly
United States Representative
2309 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-0523

RE: “Land into Trust Reform: Request for Field Hearings in California

Dear Congressman Gallegly:

On behalf of the Santa Ynez Valley Alliance, located in Santa Barbara County, California, we are writing to request that you encourage the Honorable Don Young, Chairman of the subcommittee on Indian and Native Alaskan Affairs, to hold field hearings in California.

The field hearings must address the process of transferring fee lands into trust. As you may know, California has 137 applications currently on file at the Pacific Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs encompassing more than 15,000 acres of land. At the July 12th hearing in Washington, D.C. on HR 1234 and HR 1291 discussing the merits of a “Clean Carcieri Fix”, Chairman Young stated he was considering field hearings. It became evident after testimony that there are many unintended consequences to the current fee to trust system.

As you know, in our community, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians currently has pending an application for 1,400 acres of land. While this application does not assert a gaming purpose, we are very concerned that once the land is in trust its use will change to gaming or gaming amenities without application of the relevant laws, and provisions for protecting the surrounding community of citizens.

According to a Memorandum of Understanding sent by the Chumash to the County recently, Santa Barbara County will be expected to forever relinquish control of an immense acreage in the center of the pristine Santa Ynez Valley and the ability to recoup the cost of future additional impacts, “including, without limitation, law enforcement, fire, and traffic/roads...” They “will be mitigated solely by the County at no additional cost to Santa Ynez Band.” Similarly the Band will not be responsible for cost increases caused by “inflation, labor, or material cost increases.”

POST OFFICE BOX 941
SANTA YNEZ, CA. 93460
info@santaynezvalleyalliance.org
www.santaynezvalleyalliance.org



Honorable Elton Gallegly
Page two

With no property tax revenue or jurisdiction, Santa Barbara County and Valley residents will be unable to control or offset the impact of creating another city within the Santa Ynez Valley.

Clearly, our County and the State are significantly negatively impacted by the fee to trust process. Taking land out of the authority of the County and State affects the management of shared resources for all citizens. It complicates the ability of law enforcement to ensure the safety of both the tribal and non-tribal public. It has a significant fiscal impact on local and state budgets. A newly emerging impact is the unfair competition to the business community that has a rippling effect on revenue dollars to local and state budgets.

We request that you send a letter to Chairman Don Young, inviting him to hold 2 Field Hearings in California. One in Southern and one in Northern California, so that all affected stakeholders are given an opportunity to present the many unintentional consequences of the current land into trust system. We need a process that will offer objective standards, fairness and transparency where none exists currently.

The Santa Ynez Valley Alliance is an non-profit organization which works collaboratively with individuals, groups, and governments to protect the rural character of the Santa Ynez Valley and supports good stewardship of natural and agricultural resources through education, comprehensive planning and public participation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Mark Oliver
President

cc: Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
Assembly Member Das Williams
Stand Up for California
Santa Ynez Valley News