

H.R. 1654 - To amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to require that the Secretary of the Interior determine that a gaming establishment on certain newly acquired Indian lands would be in the best interests of certain Indian tribes and not detrimental to the surrounding community before such lands would be eligible for certain exceptions to the general prohibition on gaming on such lands.

Congressman Lungren Sponsors Indian Gaming Reform Legislation

(Washington D.C.)- Congressman Dan Lungren (R-CA), has introduced legislation, HR 1654, to amend the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). This bill will require the Secretary of the Interior to determine that a gaming establishment will not cause harm to the surrounding community in order for those newly designated lands to be exempt from the general prohibition on new tribal gaming.

"This is an important process that has major effects on local communities making it more than just a federal issue. There are multiple layers of government impacted when land is newly taken into trust for gaming purposes, and I want to make sure that state and local entities have a voice in the matter," Lungren said.

As a Member of Congress in 1988, it was Mr. Lungren's view that IGRA would provide the "rules of the game" which would be applied even handedly to recognized tribes, while also ensuring that a mechanism would exist for consideration of the potential impact of Indian gaming on local communities. With the passage of time, questions not fully anticipated have arisen concerning lands of newly recognized or re-established tribes. In order to do justice to these tribes as well as retain an official consideration of the legitimate concerns of the affected surrounding communities, Congressman Lungren has been seeking a legislative fix.

Lungren states, "It has become increasingly apparent that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Commission within the Department of Interior has interpreted the statute in a manner which cuts local communities out of the decision-making process. I am hopeful this legislation will give local communities a voice at the table which will enable their interests to be considered."

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The text of the legislation is attached.

Jonathan Strong

Congressman Dan Lungren