

California Coalition Against Gambling Expansion

Rev. James B. Butler, Executive Director

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
US Department of Interior
1849 C Street, Room 4160
Washington, DC 20240

Guidiville Rancheria Application

Dear Secretary Salazar,

I am writing on behalf of the California Coalition Against Gambling Expansion, a state-wide, faith based non-profit organization. We oppose the proposed Guidiville Rancheria application. Approval of this application will authorize taking off-reservation land into trust for gambling purposes. We do not think that this was the intent when the Indian Gaming Regulation Act (IGRA) was passed.

While gambling is permitted on Indian lands, in accordance with Federal and State laws, the practice of tribes and municipalities seeking gambling opportunities on lands that are not traditionally tribal lands is a cause of great concern.

There is a lot at stake if this application receives federal approval. It will set a strong precedent for off-reservation gambling throughout California and lead to an historic expansion of gambling in our state. Right now in California, there are 21 tribes with pending applications to acquire new land for gaming and 85 other tribes with applications to acquire more than 8,000 acres of land adjacent or contiguous to existing reservations for expansion that might be used for gambling in the future.

If the Department of Interior approves the Guidiville Rancheria application it will encourage other tribes to begin reservation shopping throughout California. This was not the intent of California voters when they first authorized Indian gambling.

In 2000, California voters approved Proposition 1A to promote tribal self-reliance. Proposition 1A legalized Indian gambling on historical tribal lands that were situated away from urban areas. Since then, some tribes have been approached by professional casino operators who want to change the rules and build casinos in urban areas and along highway corridors to get the greatest financial return possible. Furthermore, taking outside land purchased by these casino operators into trust for purposes of gaming appears to violate the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), which mandates that prior to engaging in gaming, the tribe must have governmental jurisdiction over the land.

Approving this application will have lasting negative consequences in our state. I urge you to reject this application.

Rev. James B. Butler,
Executive Director