

# West Bank Homeowners Association

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April 14, 2011

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator  
Attn: Devin Rhinerson  
Senate Hart Building 331  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for Senate Bill  
"Tribal Gaming Eligibility Act"

Dear Senator Feinstein:

As you know, the West Bank Homeowners Association (WBHA) has been involved in a boundary dispute with the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) for decades. In the past we have requested your assistance with our efforts to resolve issues with the Tribes, and copied you on correspondence associated with unpleasant events arising from CRIT's attempts to exert jurisdiction in the disputed area along this 17 mile strip of land beside the Colorado River near Blythe, CA.

But today, our communication to you is unrelated to prior correspondence. Today, we wish to offer our support to you for the above referenced legislation that you and Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona have initiated. We would also like to acknowledge your actions as appropriate, just, commendable and even courageous. Members of our association know firsthand how matters regarding Native Americans many times seem to sidestep the intent of the law, ignore judicial decisions, inhibit action by Congress, and allow the overreach by the Department of the Interior, all apparently due to a common historical sympathy. You and Senator Kyl have risen above that prejudice to provide a solution that recognizes overall justice that includes non-Indians. We congratulate you on your fortitude and your wisdom included within the legislation proposed.

We agree that the proliferation of off-reservation casinos and "reservation shopping" must be stopped. As you said:

***"Enough is enough when it comes to reservation shopping"***

And:

***"The fact is that some tribes have abused their unique right to operate casinos and have ignored the intent of Congress by taking land into trust miles away from their historical lands. This is done simply to produce the most profitable casino and the greatest number of potential gamblers, often with little regard to the local communities."***

We also agree with your proposal to implement a two- pronged criterion to determine eligibility:

- ***Demonstrate a substantial modern connection to the land; and***
- ***Demonstrate a substantial aboriginal or ancestral connection to the land.***

What could be more reasonable or fair?

In our community, we have witnessed the Department of the Interior usurp the authority of Congress in attempts to resolve the reservation boundary dispute, ignoring PL88-302. We recognize that this abuse by the DoI and the BIA is consistent with actions taken around the

country by and for tribes seeking restorations of lands for casinos in urban or prime areas. Our hope is that beyond fixing the reservation shopping problem, this legislation puts the DoI/BIA on notice that Congress is taking this action to prevent such abuse of power now and in the future.

We know that you will be personally attacked in the media for your position and initiative for this legislation. We know that you will receive criticism within your own political party. But it was the right thing to do.

And we applaud you.

Sincerely,

Roger L French  
President

cc: Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack, CA 45<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman John Campbell, CA 48<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Ed Royce, CA 40<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman David Dreier, CA 26<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Raul Grijalva, Arizona 7<sup>th</sup> District  
Senator Barbara Boxer, CA