

Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens

Board of Directors

May 29, 2012

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Honorable Senator Tony Strickland
State Capitol, Room 4062
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re Letter of Opposition – SB 162

Dear Senator Strickland:

Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens represents the interests of over 22,000 Santa Ynez Valley citizens. One of our primary focuses is on the social and fiscal impacts created by fee-to-trust efforts of the Santa Ynez Band of Mission Indians (Chumash) tribe.

It has just come to our attention that amendments crafted into SB162 would prohibit any California state agency from opposing fee-to-trust efforts for the purpose of *housing, environmental protection, or cultural preservation*. As recent past actions by various tribes have shown, fee-to-trust for these stated purposes is altered to *gaming properties* once annexation is achieved.

This is a huge sham on the citizens of California. By now we are all aware that once fee-to-trust status is achieved both the state and its citizens lose input into use of the land – environmental concerns, infrastructure, water rights, land use, community plan adaptations, permits, fees, safety issues are all lost to the citizen majority.

You are no doubt aware of the current issue we have in the Santa Ynez Valley with the tribe's purchase of a 1400 acre parcel in the heart of the valley. In seeking support from local governmental entities for their fee-to-trust annexation of this land they have been rebuffed by each and every local governmental body. They have tried to secure a U.S. congressman to propose legislative annexation that circumvents the BIA fee-to-trust process. To date their efforts have borne no success. They are desperate, as the tribe realizes the pendulum is swinging against the tribal excesses the public has witnessed and been made to bear the detrimental social and economic costs of gaming activities.

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The State of California cannot allow itself to be removed from the fee-to-trust process. Nor should the State turn its back on the loss of proper development review, life safety issues for all its citizens, and the revenue generated from property taxes, sales taxes, mitigating fees, plan and review management and permitting processes.

The State of California *must* retain a seat at this table and protect and promote the interests of all of its citizens. That is what the voters sent you to Sacramento to do.

We urge you to strongly and effectively oppose SB162.

Sincerely,

Gregory M. Simon, Chairman