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The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-0504

Re: Request for Legislation Amending Federal Grant Requirements to
Mandate a Showing of Need by Applicant Indian Tribes Who
Operate Casinos and/or Other Gaming Enterprises

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter of December 16, 2013.

I recently became aware of the fact that in 2011, the Santa Ynez Valley Band of Chumash Mission Indians' Energy Efficiency, Conservation and Renewable Energy Project was granted \$500,000 by the EPA's State and Local Climate and Energy Program. State and local governmental entities were required to make a "need based" showing in their applications. Indian Tribes were not required to show "need".

Through the success of the Chumash's Casino and subsequently acquired business enterprises, each registered member of the Tribe receives a \$50,000 monthly cash distribution from the Tribe. Additional cash and non-cash-distributions to each member - such as IRA contributions and other investments - brings the total distribution to each member up to \$1 Million per year. It is my understanding that most, if not all, Tribes that have casinos enjoy similar financial self-sufficiency.

As federal funds available for grants shrink, I submit that it is time to amend the federal laws that exempt all Tribes from making a "need base" showing such that any Tribe that operates a casino must demonstrate the same "need" that all other grant applicants are required to demonstrate. Such an amendment would ensure that more federal funds would be available for Tribes who truly need financial assistance while, at the same time, ensuring that federal tax dollars are not given to Tribes who enjoy extraordinary wealth.

