



SALT RIVER

PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY

10005 East Osborn Road/Scottsdale, Arizona 85256-9722/Phone (480) 362-7400/Fax (480) 362-7593

November 12, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

As President of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, I am asking for your support for HR 308, the Keep the Promise Act. As you may know, this legislation is intended to protect the existing tribal-state gaming compacts in Arizona and prohibit a Tucson-area tribe from building a casino more than 100 miles from its main reservation. This prohibition would expire in 2027, which is when the existing gaming compacts expire. At that time, all Arizona tribes and the State of Arizona will need to negotiate new compacts. It is my tribal community in whose ancestral lands this proposed off-reservation casino is being built, and I think it is important for you to understand this problem from our perspective.

Congressman Grijalva is the chief congressional opponent to H.R. 308 because the offending tribe is located in his district. However, the proposed controversial casino is being built in the congressional district of another member who was never consulted about this proposal. Importantly, neither local communities, neighborhoods nor tribes located near the proposed casino were consulted. This tribe, the Tohono O'odham Nation, never came to my Community to discuss with us their desire to build a Las Vegas casino within our aboriginal territory.

The site of the proposed casino is also within our former reservation boundaries. While these lands were taken from us more than a century ago, we have always maintained a cultural connection to the area. If any cultural resources or objections are ever found within this area, we are the tribal government contacted to protect them. Now, another tribe with no cultural connection to the area is trying (over our objections) to establish a casino-reservation here. Allowing this to happen sets bad precedent for all tribes, and has tarnished our relationship with the local community in which this proposed casino will be located.

The Tohono O'odham Nation and Congressman Grijalva try to portray this matter as a fight between tribes over casino market share. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is about principle for my people, and about protecting our ancestral lands from the greed of casino developers and lawyers who persuaded a Tucson-area tribe to commit fraud against other tribes, the State of Arizona and voters solely for the purpose of building a casino, and then stand behind sovereign immunity to prevent a court from adjudicating those bad actions. It is the Congress that can resolve this important issue in a fair and reasonable manner that protects both our ancestral lands and the integrity of the tribal gaming policy in the State of Arizona.

All governments and all peoples should keep their promises. It is for this reason that I ask for your support for H.R. 308, the Keep the Promise Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delbert W. Ray, Sr.".

Delbert W. Ray, Sr.

President