



Tohono O'odham Nation Office of the Chairman & Vice Chairwoman

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FRANKS BILL STIFLES JOB CREATION

Last-Ditch Effort by Special Interests Attempts to Change the Rules

SELLS, Ariz. – Opponents of the West Valley Resort have seized upon their next desperate tactic: to rewrite the law and break a promise made by the federal government to the Tohono O'odham Nation. This move is all the more cynical and misguided given that this proposed legislation will prevent the creation of more than 9,000 jobs and \$300 million in annual economic impacts in Arizona.

In 1986, Arizona Senators Barry Goldwater and Dennis DeConcini, along with Rep. Mo Udall and then-Rep. John McCain, took a stand and rightfully held the U.S. Government responsible for the destruction of Tohono O'odham Nation's reservation lands by the Painted Rock Dam. These renowned statesmen took the lead in passing a clear and concise law mandating that the Nation could purchase replacement lands in unincorporated Maricopa County for economic development purposes. In return, the Nation gave up 10,000 acres of its reservation.

Today, Rep. Trent Franks, acting on behalf of narrow special interests, is sponsoring legislation that would betray the federal government's promise to the Tohono O'odham Nation and jeopardizes other similar treaties with Indian tribes.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. said, *"This entire issue stems from a promise made by the federal government when it destroyed the Tohono O'odham Nation's lands and forced the O'odham from their homes. In return, Congress promised the Nation replacement lands specifically for economic development. This promise was passed into law and signed by President Reagan. Rep. Franks' bill would betray that trust and break the federal government's promise to repair just some of the injuries the O'odham have suffered."*

After nearly three years of debate, discussion, and litigation over the West Valley Resort, the special interests opposing the project have been unable to win their case on the merits, and now seek to change the rules in order to preserve market share and control. Seven decisions by the courts and federal agencies have affirmed that the Nation has followed the law every step of the way.

Public support for the West Valley Resort remains strong. While opponents are focused on protecting their self-interests, West Valley residents understand the need for the 6,000 construction jobs and more than 3,000 permanent jobs this project will create, all at no cost to taxpayers. This is why the Glendale Tea Party, businesses groups, educators, elected officials and many others are supporting this important project.

The Nation is determined to move forward with this important economic development effort. Elected officials would be wise to stop wasting the public's money fighting job creation and instead work with the Nation to bring opportunity to the West Valley.

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