



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

COMPASSION FAITH TRADITION RESPECT
T-I:BDAG 'AMJED S-WOHOCUDA HIMDAG PI:K 'ELID

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST VALLEY RESORT OPPONENTS REVIVE JOB-KILLING BILL *“Breaking the Promise” Act Would Circumvent Courts, Halt Major Economic Development*

SELLS, Ariz. – After lengthy string of court and agency defeats, opponents of the West Valley Resort are once again attempting to circumvent the courts to protect their massive market share. This time they have gotten Representative Trent Franks to offer a bill in Congress that would unilaterally rewrite a 27-year-old settlement treaty. The proposed bill would draw an arbitrary line across Arizona to prohibit the Tohono O'odham Nation from gaming in areas that would impact the bottom line of a few powerful interests, halting the creation of thousands of new jobs in the West Valley.

Even more so than the version offered last year, this latest bill poses a dire threat to tribes across the United States by opening the door for Congress to unilaterally alter tribal/state gaming compacts at any time. The implications are dangerous for tribes, and also an attack on states' rights, as states often rely on gaming revenue sharing to sustain vital services.

The bill seeks to prevent the Nation from gaming in the “Phoenix Metropolitan Area” based upon a manufactured promise concocted by opponents in an attempt to protect their existing casinos. There are in fact no restrictions on the number of tribal casinos in the Phoenix metro area in either the state gaming compacts or the voter-approved Proposition 202 that authorized them. Years were spent crafting these agreements, with every word scrutinized by tribes and their counsel, providing the clearest indicator that such a provision was never meant to be included. Attempts to insert it into the history after the fact are simply ridiculous.

After four years of debate, discussion, and litigation over the West Valley Resort, the special interests opposing the project have spectacularly failed to win their case on the merits and now seek to change the rules in order to preserve market share and control.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. said, *“This legislation represents another attempt to unilaterally break the promise made by the federal government to recompense the Nation for flooding our lands. This bill threatens a major economic development project, stops the creation of thousands of jobs, and sets a dangerous precedent for tribes across America.”*

West Valley residents understand the need for the thousands of construction jobs and more than 3,000 permanent jobs this project will create, all at no cost to taxpayers. This is why more than two-thirds of West Valley voters consistently support the project, together with businesses groups, educators, and elected officials.

The Tohono O'odham Nation is a federally-recognized Indian tribe, with existing reservation lands in Maricopa County, Pinal County, and Pima County, Arizona. The West Valley Resort will be located at 95th and Northern avenues and will generate thousands of new jobs and more than \$300 million in annual economic impact. For more information, visit www.westvalleyopportunity.com.

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