



February 16, 2016

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The Honorable Jared Huffman  
1630 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Huffman:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing in support of your *Lytton Rancheria Homelands Act* (HR 2538). The legislation, which would take lands in Sonoma County into trust for housing and other non-gaming purposes as part of the Lytton Rancheria reservation, would memorialize the type of local mitigation agreement that CSAC believes is vital to making the fee-to-trust process work to the benefit of tribes, local governments, and communities.

As you know, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) administratively driven trust acquisition process is wrought with deficiencies and defects. Over the years, it has caused significant controversy, serious conflicts between tribes and local governments – including litigation costly to all parties – and broad distrust of the fairness of the system. Many of the longstanding flaws in the process have been repeatedly cited by CSAC in congressional testimony, as well as by the Government Accountability Office and a leading independent law review.

Your legislation recognizes that when a tribe and local government have reached a judicially enforcement agreement that accounts for all anticipated off-reservation impacts, the tribe should be permitted to have the land held in trust by the federal government. HR 2538 also would explicitly protect the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was signed between Sonoma County and the Lytton Tribe and would ensure that any future, mutually agreed-upon changes or improvements to the MOA would be insulated from the BIA.

CSAC believes that your legislation underscores the need for Congress to pass comprehensive fee-to-trust reform that provides, among other things, an incentive for Indian tribes to enter into cooperative mitigation agreements with counties to address the often significant off-reservation impacts associated with tribal development projects. In cases in which voluntary local agreements are not reached, federal law should include a mechanism that requires the Secretary of the Interior to certify that all off-site impacts have been sufficiently mitigated. As the Natural Resources Committee considers the possibility of taking up such a reform bill, CSAC looks forward to continuing to work with you to develop a fee-to-trust process that works for all parties involved.

Again, CSAC is pleased to support the *Lytton Rancheria Homelands Act*. Should you have any questions or if you need any additional information, please contact Joe Krahn, CSAC Federal Representative, Waterman and Associates at (202) 898-1444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Z. Cate".

Matt Cate  
CSAC Executive Director