

LOS COYOTES BAND



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SUPPORT FOR INDIAN GAMING COMPACTS REMAINS STRONG
*Tribes, Labor and Environmental Leaders Continue to Press for Legislative
Ratification of Barstow Agreements*

SACRAMENTO – Tribal representatives for the Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeno Indians and the Big Lagoon Rancheria vowed to continue their efforts to obtain approval of the Barstow gaming compacts as the 2007 session of the California legislature convened last week.

Labor and environmental organizations have been instrumental in leading efforts to ratify the compacts. These include: Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), California State Building and Construction Trades, Sierra Club, California League of Conservation Voters, State Parks Foundation, Save-the Redwoods League, Teamsters, California Coastal Commission, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Parks and Recreation and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Only one gaming compact was approved before the 2006 legislative session ended last year on August 31. Despite receiving strong support from both the labor and environmental communities, the Big Lagoon and Los Coyotes compacts faced heavy opposition from well-heeled Southern California gaming tribes.

"The 500,000 Members of UNITEHERE, the international hotel and casino workers union, proudly stand with our friends in the Los Coyotes and Big Lagoon Tribes. We implore the State Legislature to ratify these Tribes' compacts with urgency, now that the State Legislature has reconvened for this year's session," said Jack Gribbon, California Political Director of UNITEHERE. "We applaud the Governor and the Tribes for including worker-friendly provisions and protections in the compacts, and we look forward to helping our tribal partners to advance their cause of economic self-sufficiency in the weeks and months ahead."

Gribbon continued: "The Los Coyotes Tribe is one of the largest and poorest of the tribes in California and the Big Lagoon Tribe has agreed to mitigate environmental issues beyond what any other Tribe in the nation has agreed to do. Their decision to work in concert with their host community, as well as their workforce, ensures that the larger community of California will benefit from their proposed development. The compacts with the Big Lagoon and Los Coyotes

sovereign Indian Nations serve as a model for Indian compacts with the State of California. Importantly, these compacts have the overwhelming and passionate support of the local community of Barstow, as well as the enthusiastic support both of business and labor in that community. Additionally, these compacts serve significantly compelling state interests, in that precious coastal resources and truly endangered species will be saved for posterity, in the relocation of the casinos to the desert community of Barstow. These compacts bring together a 'perfect balance' in economic and environmental benefits, and deserve immediate ratification by our State's leaders in the Legislature."

Dr. Catherine Siva Saubel, Los Coyotes chairwoman and noted commissioner on the California Native American Heritage Commission since 1987, echoed enthusiasm for the new legislative session and the ratification of the compacts.

"We will continue to share the unique circumstances of our compacts with legislators and bring attention to the growing disparity among California's richest tribes who already own billion dollar casinos and poorest tribes such as the Los Coyotes who literally have nothing," said Dr. Saubel.

Big Lagoon Rancheria Chairman Virgil Moorehead agreed. "The 2007 legislative session provides our coalition with the opportunity to highlight the reasons why the Legislature should protect Big Lagoon through ratification of our compacts," said Chairman Moorehead. "We look forward to meeting with the new Legislature and demonstrating to them that the Barstow compacts are a win for all parties involved-- the state, the Tribes, the environment, working Californians and the City of Barstow."

Governor Schwarzenegger announced compacts with the Los Coyotes and Big Lagoon tribes in September 2005. The City of Barstow has approved Municipal Services Agreements with both tribes. The Los Coyotes and Big Lagoon have submitted land-into-trust applications to the federal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs is currently preparing a draft environmental impact statement to identify potential environmental impacts of the project. California lawmakers must pass legislation to approve the compacts, the final state step in proceeding with jointly developing the casino resort.

The Barstow compacts protect the environmentally sensitive Big Lagoon reservation from development, provide the Tribes with the resources they need to become economically self-sufficient and create approximately 4,000 new jobs and millions of dollars in revenue for the Barstow community.

Members of Los Coyotes spent the final 16 days of the last legislative session in 2006 on a "Fast for Justice" on the lawn of the State Capitol building in Sacramento. They fasted to call attention to the growing disparity between rich and poor tribes and to urge legislators to end the gridlock that has prevented the compacts from being ratified.

The Los Coyotes Band is a federally recognized Tribe that was established in 1900. The Tribe's ancestral lands are nestled in the rural mountains of San Diego County. Due to its remote and mountainous nature, there is still little development on the reservation – electricity was only

brought to an edge of the reservation in 1998. Currently very few tribal members have electricity or running water including the Chairwoman and her family. The Tribe has ties to the Barstow area that date back generations and they have hunted and traded with and married members of the Indian tribes that formerly lived in the area.

Big Lagoon Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe that was established on July 10, 1918. The Tribe's homeland is situated on a 20-acre parcel of land north of Eureka in coastal Humboldt County. The Tribal Rancheria is located at the edge of the environmentally sensitive Big Lagoon, which has been recognized as an important natural habitat area that the State of California has determined to protect. The lagoon, surrounded by State and county parks, is home to a variety of special-status plants and animals including coho salmon, steelhead rainbow trout, chinook salmon and tidewater goby. It is a popular destination for hikers, campers, boaters and fishermen.

While extremely rare, off-reservation gaming is expressly permitted by federal law in order to address unique circumstances surrounding specific reservation locations. The process is rigorous and can take as long as 24 months to complete. The Department of Interior, State Legislature, Governor and local communities all have a say in the matter. In the 17 years since this process was established, only *three* Tribes across the entire nation have successfully completed this "two-part determination" process and established off-reservation casinos.

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The Barstow Casinos and Resort are designed to capture some of the market of an estimated 60 million cars that travel through the community on their way to and from Las Vegas each year. The projects will support approximately 900 construction jobs and 1,700 full time positions at the casinos. It is expected that the Los Coyotes and Big Lagoon tribes will contribute to the local community government yearly and generate millions of dollars in new revenue for the Barstow economy. The Barstow community has lagged behind the state in economic development with more than 35% of the residents on public assistance. More than 2,000 local residents signed postcards addressed to the Governor asking him to negotiate the compacts. More information is available at www.barstowcasinosandresort.com.