

LOS COYOTES BAND



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Contact:

For Los Coyotes: Tom Shields
(517) 372-4400 (o), (517) 449-9810 (c)

For Big Lagoon: Jason Barnett
(415) 227-9700 (o), (415) 999-0917 (c)

Tribes, Governor Sign Agreements to Extend Deadlines for Gaming Compacts

SACRAMENTO—Tribal leaders from the Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeno Indians and Big Lagoon Rancheria today announced they and Governor Schwarzenegger signed agreements to extend deadlines in the Tribes' compacts for legislative action and the land-into-trust process until the end of this legislative year.

"The federal government has worked for more than 18 months to place the land into trust and is diligently pursuing the matter," said Los Coyotes Spokeswoman Catherine Saubel. "With this step in the journey moving ahead, we sincerely hope the Legislature will recognize this tremendous partnership that meets the needs of the Tribes, the community of Barstow and the State of California by ratifying the compacts."

The compacts signed by the Tribes and the Governor, in September 2005, included a May 31, 2007 deadline for completion of the federal land to trust process for the Barstow site, along with a provision for extension. The compacts also include an August 31, 2007 deadline for approval of the compacts themselves. The new agreements extend those deadlines to September 17, 2007.

"We are pleased that the process is moving forward but we're disappointed the compacts—signed by the Governor in 2005— have not yet been ratified by the Legislature," said Big Lagoon Chairman Virgil Moorehead. "Now is the time for the Legislature to make the right decision and provide us with the same opportunities as other Tribes have received."

If the Legislature does not approve the compact by the end of this legislative year, the compacts—and a settlement agreement between Big Lagoon and the State—will expire, allowing Big Lagoon to move forward to build a casino on its land in Humboldt County, which the State contends is too ecologically critical to host development.

City of Barstow Mayor Lawrence Dale echoed the call for legislative action.

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“We thank the Governor and the Tribes for agreeing to extend the deadline to place the Barstow land into federal trust and bringing the Barstow Casinos and Resort one step closer to becoming reality,” said Mayor Lawrence Dale, of the City of Barstow. “This community has always been overwhelmingly supportive of the project from day one and we urge the Legislature to ratify the compacts without further delay.”

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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 percent 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.