

WESTERN STATES SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

4718 Ponderosa Drive • Carson City, NV 89701-6735

April 2, 2006

The Honorable Gale Norton
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

On March 30, 2006, a number of community groups filed a petition for rule making with you for your consideration. The petition requested that you direct the Bureau of Indian Affairs to promulgate rules to implement section 20 of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 USC 2701).

Our Association has reviewed the petition and would like to express our support for the requested action. The Western States Sheriffs' Association is deeply concerned about the impact off-reservation gaming is having on communities throughout the west. Each of the thirteen states represented by the WSSA, except the state of Utah is dealing with off-reservation gaming and the impact it is having on public safety and other local community issue that are state mandated. Issues such as taxation, health and safety requirement, and building codes.

While we support the right of Indian tribes to engage in economic development by offering casino gaming, there must be limits on where such development takes place. Congress intended section 20 to impose such limits, and create balance between tribal and community interests. The manner in which the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Bureau of Indian Affairs has implemented section 20 however, disregards Congress' intended limits, by allowing tribes to develop gaming on lands to which they have little connection and to which local communities legitimately object.

Regulations that establish a formal process with notice and public participation and with fair standards are long overdue. We ask that you agree to the petition and direct the BIA to develop regulations that reflect the concerns of all parties, including the communities most directly and adversely impacted by gaming.

We have enclosed for your information WSSA Resolution relating to this matter.

Respectfully,

SHERIFF CLAY PARKER, PRESIDENT


By: Paul B. McGrath
Executive Director

cc: Associate Dep. Sec. James Cason, Dept. of the Interior
Acting Dep. Ass't Sec. George Skibine, Dept. of the Interior
Sen. John McCain, Indian Affairs Committee
Rep. Richard Pombo, House Resources Committee

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