

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0004
(916) 319-2004

DISTRICT OFFICES
600 A STREET, SUITE D
DAVIS, CA 95616
(530) 757-1034
2721 NAPA VALLEY CORPORATE DRIVE
NAPA, CA 94558
(707) 224-0440



COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
HEALTH

SELECT COMMITTEES
CHAIR, WINE
AUTOMATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
GREEN INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
PORTS AND GOODS MOVEMENT
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
WILDFIRE PREVENTION

JOINT COMMITTEES
FAIRS ALLOCATION AND CLASSIFICATION
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

September 25, 2023

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to express my grave concern about the Koi Nation's application to acquire 68 acres of land into trust for a casino in Sonoma County near my Fourth Assembly District of California. As the representative of numerous tribes in this part of Northern California, I've taken great pride to have worked with my constituents and statewide tribal nations to protect cultural resources and provide opportunities for economic development.

I need not tell you how complex these issues can be. However, when I seek wisdom on issues of tribal rights, my consultation begins with tribes that have the closest ancestral ties to the lands in question. While it is my great hope that the members of the Koi Nation find opportunities to overcome our state and nation's devastating history with regard to our treatment of indigenous people, it is also my responsibility to weigh their proposals in the context of their neighbors, both tribal nations and the communities that may be impacted by plans for development. In this instance, it does not appear that the site in the Koi proposal satisfies the federal legal requirement of having a "significant historical connection" to ancestral lands, nor evidence of cultural ties such as ancestral villages, burial sites, or subsistence use.

Several of my constituent tribes and those in neighboring areas that *are* indigenous to Sonoma County including the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Cloverdale Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, and Lytton Rancheria oppose both the proposed project and the Koi Nation's ancestral claims to the land. I have also heard of grave concerns from the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors and neighbors of the proposed site that a location in a residential neighborhood is not only inappropriate but could represent a danger to local schools and residences.

It is with great respect, and regret, that I express concern about the Koi Nation proposal. While I hope that you will give your full, fair and serious consideration to their proposal, I must ask if you find the facts consistent with what I have learned, that you reject the Koi Nation's application to acquire this land in trust and the proposed casino.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to have your staff contact my Chief of Staff, John Ferrera at john.ferrera@asm.ca.gov or 916-319-2004.

Sincerely,



CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY
Assembly Speaker pro Tempore
Assemblymember, Fourth District