

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0012
(916) 319-2012
FAX (916) 319-2112



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ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES

October 2, 2023

Amy Dutschke
Regional Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2820
Sacramento, CA 95825

Re: Koi Nation of Northern California Proposed Casino Resort

Dear Director Dutschke,

I write to express my respectful opposition to the Koi Nation of Northern California's proposed casino resort project in Sonoma County. As the representative of the 12th Assembly District, I have worked closely with local and statewide tribal nations to create opportunities for improved economic conditions and advocate for the protections of cultural resources.

While these issues can be complex, it is also important to weigh these proposals within the context of neighboring tribal nations and communities that will be impacted by this development. In this case, it does not appear that the site proposed by the Koi Nation 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 tribes neighboring the area, such as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, which is within the 12th Assembly District, oppose both the proposed project and the Koi Nation's ancestral claims to the land. I also echo concerns shared by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors regarding the proposed site's location within a residential neighborhood, as it is inappropriate and could represent a public safety risk to residents and local schools in an area already designated as having a high fire risk.

It is for these reasons that I must regretfully oppose the Koi Nation proposal, and ask with great respect that you consider rejecting the application to acquire this land in trust and establish the proposed casino. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Chief of Staff, Aaron Vad at aaron.vad@asm.ca.gov or (916) 319-2012.

Sincerely,

DAMON CONNOLLY
Assemblymember, 12th District