



SANTA YNEZ VALLEY COALITION

Myths vs Facts

Tribal Land Expansion in the Santa Ynez Valley Federal Special Interest Legislation, HR 1157

Myth: *The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians asserts that it needs to expand its reservation boundaries to include the Camp 4 parcel, 1400 acres of agricultural land, to address the housing needs of tribal members and provide a Tribal community center.*

Fact: In a March 2016 public meeting, the Tribe disclosed plans for the development of the Camp 4 property in combination with an adjacent 365-acre parcel connecting its Casino Resort. These plans include millions of square feet of commercial development along with hundreds of acres for recreational uses, housing, and Tribal “buildings.” The scale of the Tribe’s announced development will devastate the agricultural and ranching character of the Santa Ynez Valley.

Myth: *The Tribe asserts that California law and Santa Barbara County zoning rules prohibit it from meeting the housing needs of its members. As a result, federal intervention is necessary to add this land to its reservation via “fee to trust.”*

Fact: Members of the broader Santa Ynez Valley community have supported an amendment to the County’s General and Community Plans that would permit the Tribe to address its housing needs and build other facilities. The Tribe has refused to consider this option. Federal law and Bureau of Indian Affairs policies do not regulate land use on reservations. Thus, if the Tribe’s reservation is expanded to include the Camp 4 property, the Tribe will be free to develop it without regulation.

Myth: *The Tribe seeks to work collaboratively with the County and its residents to meet the Tribe’s needs.*

Fact: In a March 2016 public meeting, the former Tribal Chairman threatened the County and its citizens stating that because the County voted against the addition of 2 acres of land into the current reservation, the Tribe would consider submitting “fee to trust” applications for all 22 properties it owns in the County and seek federal legislation to “do the same”.

More recently, in guest opinion columns published in Santa Barbara area newspapers, the current Chairman said that the Tribe would continue seeking federal legislation to expand its reservation that would allow it to develop the Camp 4 property at any level of intensity, bypassing local and state land use laws and regulations.

Myth: *Federal legislation is needed because the County refuses to negotiate with the tribe to meet its housing needs.*

Fact: **Public records clearly show that neither the County nor the community, is “stonewalling” negotiations. Nine government-to-government meetings have taken place and more are scheduled.**

In the same guest opinion columns, the Tribal Chairman said, “progress is being made.”

Myth: *If Camp 4 becomes part of the reservation, there would be little fiscal impact to the County because the property is zoned for agricultural use, which currently generates minimal property tax.*

Fact: **If Camp 4 is developed at any level of intensity, let alone at the scale shown in the Tribe’s March 3, 2016, plan the impacts to roads, infrastructure, and other County services will be significant and result in consequential fiscal burdens with no property taxes generated to offset those costs.**

The “payment-in-lieu” scheme offered by the Tribe will not offset the fiscal burden on County taxpayers of potentially millions in unfunded liabilities.

Any “payment-in-lieu” commitments from Tribe to offset potential development impacts are subject to the discretion of future tribal governments and thus cannot be considered reliable to sources funding equivalent to property taxes.

October 31, 2016