



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES PASSES HR 1157 ON BEHALF OF SANTA YNEZ CHUMASH INDIANS

SANTA YNEZ, CA – July 13, 2016 – Today the House Committee on Natural Resources voted 29-1 to pass HR 1157, the Santa Ynez Land Transfer Act of 2015. This legislation would allow the tribe to take 1,390 acres, commonly known as “Camp 4,” into federal trust for the purpose of providing 143 houses for tribal members and their families.

“We were pleased with the Committee vote,” said Kenneth Kahn, Tribal Chairman of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. “The members of the House Committee on Natural Resources understood the importance of placing our land into trust in order to help us build a stronger community.”

The House Committee on Natural Resources scheduled a markup on July 12 to consider several bills, including HR 1157. After the markup, which is the process by which congressional committees and subcommittees debate, amend, and rewrite proposed legislation, the House voted this morning.

“The one lone dissenting vote was Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-Santa Barbara),” said Sam Cohen, Government and Legal Affairs representative for the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. “While I understand Congresswoman Capps is sincere in believing that this issue should be resolved locally, she is also well aware that the tribe has been trying to negotiate with Santa Barbara County since 2011.”

"The strength of this vote coming out of the Natural Resources Committee demonstrates that Congress fully understands progress needs to be made to address the desperate housing situation facing the members of our tribe," said Chairman Kahn. "To that end, the leadership of our tribe remains committed to working with the county in finding common sense solutions to the issues of concern to both of our communities."

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians purchased the Camp 4 land in 2010 and shortly after began the process of placing the land into trust. The tribe is taking the two routes available to place land into trust: administratively and legislatively.

In July 2013, the tribe filed a federal trust application with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In October 2013, federal legislation (HR 1133) was introduced to take land into trust on behalf of the tribe and in February 2015 federal legislation (HR 1157) was re-introduced to Congress.

"The need for housing on our reservation is serious and needs to be addressed immediately," said Chairman Kahn. "Today's vote represents one more step toward accomplishing our goal."

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians owns and operates the Chumash Casino Resort, which is located on the tribe's reservation on Highway 246 in Santa Ynez, California. The tribe also owns Hotel Corque, Route 246 and the Hadsten House in Solvang and two gas stations in Santa Ynez. As the largest employer in the Santa Ynez Valley, the tribe employs more than 1,800 residents of Santa Barbara County.