

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

June 30, 2022

Chad Broussard  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Pacific Regional Office  
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2820  
Sacramento, California 95825

Dear Mr. Broussard:

As the Bureau of Indian Affairs (the Bureau) prepares its Environmental Assessment and Tribal Environmental Impact Report for the Koi Nation's application to acquire 68 acres of land into trust for a casino in Sonoma County in the Second District of California, we write to you to voice concern and our opposition to the project. While we remain champions for tribal interests, we would like to bring to your attention serious concerns raised by both the tribes with ancestral ties to the land and the neighboring constituents that render the proposed plans inappropriate for the area.

Federal law requires that a restored tribe have a "significant historical connection" to the land where it proposes to game, but the land in question is over 50 miles from the Koi Nation's ancestral land in the Lower Lake area of Lake County. The Koi Nation lacks evidence of a historical connection such as ancestral villages, burial sites, or subsistence use of the land. Further, the tribes 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. These tribes that have documented historical connections to the area will also have cultural and archeological concerns about the proposal that the Bureau must address. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors also shares concern and passed a resolution opposing the establishment of this casino within the County.

In addition, we have heard from worried constituents in the area about the intended use of the land for a casino. The proposed project would be located in a residential area with elementary schools, parks and religious centers in close proximity. The anticipated traffic and construction from a casino would create unwanted noise and pose a danger to these residents – not to mention its associated air quality and climate impacts. Increased traffic also poses a serious concern when considering wildfire evacuation routes and the thousands of vehicles that could be added to the road from the project.

We also cannot ignore the obvious environmental pressure this project will create. A new casino of this magnitude, and its construction, will increase water pressure on the Russian River, as well

as generate possible runoff and groundwater impacts from converting what is currently open space into impermeable surfaces.

Finally, we would like to request that the comment period for this public scoping process be extended. With multiple Federal holidays in the past month and the level of community interest, it seems appropriate that your agency extend the deadline for public comment beyond 30 days.

Thank you for your full, fair and serious consideration of our request for you to reject the Koi Nation's application to acquire this land in trust and the proposed casino.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress