

## Letters : Opinion: County should cancel 'government-to-government' talks

Nancy Crawford-Hall

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Dear Chairman Salud Carbajal and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors:

I am writing regarding the proposed meeting on Aug. 20, to determine whether to proceed with a government-to-government discussion with the people currently operating a casino in the Santa Ynez Valley.

I know that by now you are familiar with the letter from the state of California Governor's Office dated Aug. 26, 2005, stating the well-researched historical reasons why fee-to-trust applications were not to be accepted in this state, unlike in many other states. This letter made the very clear statements regarding the lack of any cohesive "government" among the various villages in the valley. The people were obviously from many different places, as there also was no linguistic common thread, either. Thus to say that the people looking to be called by a single "tribal" name has, to date, not been verified, only claimed.

By having a "government-to- government" meeting is to unwittingly validate something that perhaps is not true and, certainly, flies in the face of history. The research clearly makes this evident and I am not sure it would be wise for Santa Barbara County to ignore the historical facts.

Yes, unconstrained development across a small, two-lane street from San Lucas Ranch would be devastating to the agricultural operation that has been producing products for almost a century. Property value would also be negatively impacted, but we are not the only ones to be affected by major development by a "foreign" government. You may not be aware of this, but the local people applying for the fee-to-trust status on Camp 4 have been investigating how to obtain "historic" water rights to water in the Santa Ynez Valley, including presumably the water in Lake Cachuma that feeds the entire county. An accounting of this effort has been published in the University of California's Hastings College of the Law in the summer of 2013.

The Camp 4 property sits over the largest aquifer in the valley and has the largest well, pumping 1,400 gallons per minute. I know this because my family drilled that well and another one across the road many years ago. I know the property well, as we owned it for many decades. Drawing down that water supply for major development, whether houses or resorts and golf courses, will negatively impact all surrounding properties and it is fairly clear that there is no intent to be mindful of the needs of others.

Beyond that, this report states a new philosophy of merging creeks with underground aquifers that may or may not be connected. Thus, any water source "from Malibu to Monterey" could potentially be swept up in ground-breaking legislation taking total control of all our water,

thereby devastating our state economy due to tens of thousands of acres being made valueless due to lack of water. California's water law is quite different from other states and one's property lines set the water rights in most cases.

Thus, it is my opinion that to hold any discussions that are described as government-to-government is to set in motion a whole variety of undesirable consequences. To treat one group of people differently than another is discriminatory and not to be tolerated these days. I appeal to your understanding of what is good for the county and all its residents and ask you to cancel the Aug. 20 meeting and decline to participate in any "government-to-government" discussions until that time when you can establish that you are, in fact, dealing with a legitimate government instead of just a claim.

*The author is a managing member of San Lucas Ranch LLC.*