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August 3, 2026

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Department of the Interior Revokes Gaming Eligibility for Vallejo Casino; Cites Scotts Valley's Lack of Historical Connection

Following a thorough, fact-based federal review, the Department of the Interior affirms what the historical record has long made clear: the site of the proposed Scotts Valley casino lies within Patwin ancestral territory and is ineligible for gaming by the Pomo tribe.

Vallejo, CA – On Friday, after thoroughly reviewing relevant evidence, the United States Department of the Interior (DOI or Department) has determined, once again, that the site of the proposed Scotts Valley casino in Vallejo is not eligible for gaming. The decision concludes a 16-month long federal review in which the Department considered evidence from all parties, examined the full record, and reached a conclusion as to Scotts Valley's lack of historic connection to the project site that is grounded in law and the facts.

The reconsidered decision follows a March 2025 DOI notice that the Department would reconsider a rushed, last-minute approval of the project, noting that important evidence had been improperly excluded from the approval. The reconsideration process allowed the Department to weigh the extensive historical documentation demonstrating that the proposed gaming site lies within the ancestral territory of the Patwin people.

"Today's decision reflects a fair, transparent, fact-based review of Scotts Valley's alleged historical connection to Vallejo that we have long advocated for," **said Yocha Dehe Chairman Anthony Roberts**. "Since the beginning, all we have asked is that all the facts be considered and our voices be heard. The Department took the time to consider all the facts and evidence, and that evidence revealed what history already makes clear: this land is Patwin ancestral territory. It always has been, and it always will be. This process has been difficult and painful, but today's decision brings long-overdue validation and begins to set things right."

"For generations, our people have worked to protect the lands, waters, and cultural resources in Vallejo and the surrounding areas of Patwin ancestral territory, and we will continue that work for generations to come," **Chairman Roberts continued**. "Our fight has never been about holding another tribe down. It was about protecting Patwin ancestral territory and about ensuring that decisions on tribal lands are made fairly, lawfully, and based on true historical ties. We have always been and we remain committed to supporting tribes pursuing gaming within their own homelands."

“Our Tribe has consistently stood firm in defense of Patwin ancestral lands and the integrity of the restored-lands process,” **said Charlie Wright, Chairman of the Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation**, a non-gaming Patwin tribe that opposed the proposed development in ancestral Patwin territory. “Scotts Valley has not demonstrated the significant historical connection to Vallejo required under federal law. We support tribes securing trust lands and pursuing economic development through the legal pathway supported by the historical record. Today’s decision upholds the integrity of the restored-lands gaming-eligibility process and ensures decisions are based on the documented historical ties required by federal law.”

The Department previously determined on three separate occasions that Scotts Valley does not meet federal requirements mandating a “significant historical connection” to land on which gaming is proposed to occur. The agency’s hasty approval of the casino project in January 2025, during the closing moments of the prior presidential administration was met with mass opposition from sovereign tribes, government officials, and concerned citizens.

Friday’s determination restores a long-standing record and reaffirms the standards that protect tribal homelands across the country.

For more information on the project, visit www.protecttribalhomelands.com.

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