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Court Upholds Federal Reconsideration of Vallejo Casino Project and Clarifies that Project Approval May Be Revoked at the End of that Process

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation applauds decision affirming the Department of Interior's authority to reconsider Vallejo casino proposal

Vallejo, CA – The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation applauded today's decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia rejecting the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians' challenge to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) reconsideration of a controversial casino project in Vallejo.

Earlier this year, DOI decided to reconsider a rushed, last-minute approval of the project, noting that important evidence had not been considered. The Pomo tribe, whose homelands are in Clear Lake, nearly 100 miles away from Vallejo, attempted to block that reconsideration process. Today's decision summarily rejects that attempt, reinforcing DOI's authority and responsibility to reconsider the divisive project that would bulldoze a cultural site sacred to local Patwin tribes.

"Today's court decision correctly reaffirms the Department of the Interior's decision to reevaluate this proposed casino, which would destroy irreparable cultural and ecological resources and has already been rejected three other times by the Department," said Yocha Dehe Chairman Anthony Roberts. **"As the Department stated in its letter announcing its decision to reconsider the project, this process will assess all facts and evidence – revealing what history already makes clear: Scotts Valley has no historical connection to this land."**

"For years we have worked with our federal, state, and local partners to shed light on the flaws in this process," Chairman Roberts continued. **"We are grateful the Department can continue doing the right thing by evaluating *all* evidence. We are confident this reconsideration process will reveal the truth Scotts Valley has attempted to hide from the very start – their ancestral lands are not in Vallejo, and they never were."**

The Court criticized DOI for failing to notify Scotts Valley before temporarily rescinding the project's gaming eligibility determination. But the Court also made clear that this error does not limit the agency's authority to proceed with reconsideration or permanent revocation of the approvals. As District Judge Trevor McFadden explained, **"The Court's remedy does not bar Interior from continuing its reconsideration, nor does it stop the Department from revoking the Band's gaming eligibility at the end of that process. For that reason, Scotts Valley would be ill-served by placing undue reliance on today's decision."**

DOI has [determined](#)—on three separate occasions—that Scotts Valley lacks the significant historical connection to the Bay Area needed to acquire land eligible for gaming, [including to Vallejo specifically](#). Despite this, in the final days of the previous Administration, it hastily approved the project in the face of mass opposition from tribes, [government officials](#), and thousands of concerned citizens.

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

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