

Casino proposal in North Richmond nixed by federal officials

By: [Robert Rogers](#) | May 25, 2012 – 2:29 pm

A 30-acre area of unincorporated North Richmond is not eligible for a casino, representatives from the U.S. Department of the Interior announced today.

The Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians had sought to build a large casino on a 30-acre slice of land in North Richmond near Parr Boulevard on the Richmond Parkway. But according to a department press release, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Donald “Del” Laverdure determined that the tribe’s application does not qualify for gaming because the tribe lacks significant historical connections to the site.

“We determined that the Band’s parcels near the city of Richmond did not qualify as restored lands under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act’s equal footing exceptions because it could not demonstrate it had significant historical connection to the site,” Laverdure stated in the press release.

Similar reasoning also factored into a ruling in August, 2011, against the Guidiville Band of Pomo Indians’ plans to build a casino at Point Molate, a former Navy fuel depot in the city of Richmond.

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, which governs unincorporated North Richmond, also opposed the Scotts Valley casino plan. Board of Supervisors chair Mary Piepho sent a letter to the Bureau of Indian Affairs dated May 17, 2012, reiterating the board’s objection to the casino on grounds that the Scotts Valley Band’s application did not meet the “restored lands” requirement.

On Friday, Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia said he was pleased with the decision.

“The county carried the major weight of the opposition from the outset,” Gioia said. “We expended over a million dollars in studies, analysis, filing briefs and other activities. It was clear that the impacts to the surrounding communities would have outweighed the benefits.”

Andres Soto, a local anti-casino advocate, hailed the decision as well. “This determination nails the coffin on any possibility of a casino in North Richmond,” Soto said. “The type of gambling proposed with this casino—Las Vegas-style slots in which players are pitted against the house—are associated with negative social and economic consequences.” Analyses by the county concluded that the surrounding urban area would have borne significant impacts, including traffic congestion, increased public health needs and potential affects to local crime.

The Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians of California is a federally recognized tribe of Pomo and Wailaki Indians in Lake County, California.

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