

Senate Committee on Governmental Organization
Informational Hearing
First Amendment to Tribal-State Gaming Compact between the State of California and the
Yurok Tribe
August 9, 2016 – 9:30 a.m.
Room 4203 State Capitol

Compact Overview

SUMMARY

The First Amendment to the Tribal-State Gaming Compact (hereafter “Amended Compact”) between the State of California and the Yurok Tribe (hereafter “Tribe”) was executed on August 4, 2016. The Amended Compact conforms the workers’ compensation provisions of the Tribe’s existing 2006 compact to those of more recent compacts. All other provisions of the existing compact remain intact.

In 2006, the Tribe entered into a tribal-state compact [SB 106 (Wiggins, Chapter 37, Statutes of 2007)] that authorized it to operate one gaming facility at a future site and an additional one at an ancillary facility (a fuel mart), both of which are located within its existing reservation. The compact authorized the Tribe to operate no more than 99 gaming devices (slot machines) and specified that no more than 20 may be operated at the ancillary gaming facility.

Under terms of the 2006 compact, the Tribe agreed to pay into the State General Fund an annual fee, as specified, based on a percentage of its net win from its operation of gaming devices. Also, the 2006 compact provided that as long as the Tribe’s membership remained at least 4,000 members it could deduct from the amount to be paid to the State certain payments made pursuant to intergovernmental agreements with Del Norte County and Humboldt County.

Additionally, the 2006 compact contained other provisions relating to: exclusivity; licensing requirements and procedures for employees and gaming suppliers; testing and inspection of gaming devices; rules and regulations for the operation and management of the gaming facility; off-reservation environmental impacts; public and workplace health and safety; and labor provisions.

Furthermore, the 2006 compact required the Tribe to participate in the State’s workers’ compensation program with respect to employees employed at the gaming facility. The 2006 compact provides that its terms may be amended upon written agreement of both parties. The parties agreed in writing to negotiate regarding amending the 2006 compact’s provisions pertaining to mandatory participation in the State workers’ compensation program.

The Amended Compact's preamble notes that the State and the Tribe share an interest in creating a framework within which the gaming facility can operate successfully to generate revenue for essential government programs for tribal members while also ensuring that other interests, including an efficient and effective system to address the appropriate costs arising from employees who are injured or become sick while performing work-related duties, are also furthered.

The vehicle identified for providing the constitutionally required legislative ratification of this Amended Compact is AB 1977 (Wood).

EXISTING LAW

Existing law provides, under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), for the negotiation and conclusion of compacts between federally recognized Indian tribes and the state for the purpose of conducting Class III gaming activities on Indian lands within a state as a means of promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments. Existing law expressly authorizes a number of tribal-state gaming compacts between the State of California and specified Indian tribes. Existing law authorizes the conduct of Class III gaming activities to the extent such activities are permitted by state law, a gaming compact has been concluded by a federally recognized tribe and the state, and the compact has been approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Existing law limits the operation of Class III gaming activities to Indian lands acquired on or before October 17, 1988. Existing law also provides for certain exceptions to conduct gaming activities on Indian lands acquired after October 17, 1988.

Existing law defines Indian lands to mean all lands within the limits of any Indian reservation, and any lands title to which is either held in trust by the United States for the benefit of any Indian tribe or individual or held by any Indian tribe or individual subject to restriction by the United States against alienation and over which an Indian tribe exercises governmental power.

Existing law requires the state to negotiate to conclude a compact in good faith with an Indian tribe having jurisdiction over the Indian lands upon which the Class III gaming activity is to be conducted. Existing law also provides the United States district courts with jurisdiction over any cause of action initiated by a tribal government alleging that the state failed to negotiate in good faith to conclude a compact. Furthermore, existing law prescribes the remedy, mediation supervised by the courts, if it is found that the state failed to negotiate in good faith to conclude a compact.

Existing law authorizes the Governor, under the California Constitution, to negotiate and conclude compacts, subject to ratification by the Legislature.

Brief History and Background – Yurok Tribe

According to information provided by the Tribe, the Yurok Tribe is the largest tribe in California with over 6,100 tribal members encompassing a reservation of approximately 57,000 acres. The Tribe is a natural resource tribe with federally reserved rights to the water and fish of the Klamath River. The Yurok Reservation is located in the most isolated region of Northwest California, consisting of lands one mile on each side of the lower forty-four (44) miles of the Klamath River from just above the confluence of the Trinity River at Weitchpec to the mouth of the river as it flows into the Pacific Ocean. Reservation lands include parts of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, two of the largest land based counties in the state of California.

Following ratification of its 2006 tribal-state gaming compact, the Tribe opened the Redwood Hotel Casino in 2014 which consists of two separate entities, the Redwood Holiday Inn Express and the Redwood Casino. The Redwood Holiday Inn Express is a 60-room hotel complete with exercise room and pool. The Redwood Casino, located in Klamath, CA, currently hosts 96 Class III machines and includes the Abalone Bar and Grill – a 50-seat restaurant and sports bar. The development of the Redwood Hotel Casino is only a portion of a broader Master Plan for the down-river Yurok community, which also includes the Yurok Justice Center, the Yurok Visitor Center, the Klamath Gateway Project, a new wastewater treatment center, and provisions for increased public safety presence by Del Norte County deputized Yurok police officers.

Detailed Provisions of the Amended Compact

Workers' Compensation – Terms of the 2006 compact provide that: (a) the Tribe agrees to participate in the State's workers' compensation program with respect to employees at the casino and all disputes arising from the workers' compensation laws shall be heard by the State Workers' Compensation Appeals Board pursuant to the California Labor Code; (b) the Tribe acknowledges the jurisdiction of the Board and the courts of the State of California in such manners; (c) the Tribe agrees that it will participate in the State's unemployment compensation program for providing benefits and unemployment compensation disability benefits to employees at the casino; and, (d) the Tribe shall withhold all taxes due to the State, except for Tribal members living on the Tribe's reservation, and forward such amounts to the State.

The Amended Compact repeals the above-referenced provisions, recasts them, as specified, and additionally, provides that in lieu of participation in the State's workers' compensation system, the Tribe may create and maintain a system through self-insurance, which includes specified provisions, including hearings before an independent tribunal.

The changes reflect conformity with more recent compacts.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA)

In 1988, Congress enacted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) to provide a statutory basis for the operation and regulation of gaming on Indian lands. IGRA provides that an Indian tribe may conduct gaming activity on Indian lands if the activity “is not specifically prohibited by federal law and is conducted within a State which does not prohibit such gaming activity.”

IGRA distinguishes between three classes of gaming (Class I, Class II, and Class III) and provides for different forms of regulation for each class. Class I gaming includes “social games” for minor prizes or “traditional forms of Indian gaming.” Class II gaming is defined to include bingo and card games that are explicitly authorized by the laws of the state, or that are not explicitly prohibited by the laws of the state and are played at any location in the State, so long as the card games are played in conformity with those laws and regulations. Class III gaming includes such things as slot machines, casino games and banked card games such as black jack and baccarat. Class III gaming may only be conducted under terms of a compact negotiated between an Indian tribe and a State.

IGRA was enacted against a legal background in which Indian tribes and individuals generally are exempt from state taxation within their own territory. IGRA provides that with the exception of assessments permitted under the statute, to defray the State’s costs of regulating gaming activity, IGRA shall not be interpreted as conferring upon a State authority to impose any tax, fee, charge, or other assessment upon an Indian tribe to engage in Class III activity. Nor may a State refuse to enter into negotiations based on the lack of authority to impose such a tax, fee, charge, or other assessment.

When a tribe requests negotiations for a Class III compact, IGRA requires the State to negotiate with the Indian tribe in good faith. IGRA provides a comprehensive process to prevent an impasse in compact negotiations, which is triggered when a tribe files suit alleging that the State has refused to negotiate or has failed to negotiate in good faith.

Before 2000, the California Constitution prohibited Class III gaming. In 2000, California voters approved Proposition 1A which had been proposed by the Governor and passed by the Legislature. Proposition 1A amended the California Constitution to permit the State to negotiate compacts with federally recognized Indian tribes for certain Class III gaming activities. Because non-Indian parties were still forbidden from operating gaming facilities, Proposition 1A granted Indian tribes a “constitutionally protected monopoly on most types of Class III games in California.”

SUPPORT

Yurok Tribe; California Labor Federation; and, UNITE-HERE, AFL-CIO

OPPOSITION

None received

PRIOR and CURRENT LEGISLATION

SB 1426 (Hall, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, executed on August 4, 2016. (Pending referral to Assembly floor)

SB 404 (De León, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, executed on June 22, 2016. (Pending referral to Assembly floor)

SB 187 (Hall, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Jamul Indian Village, executed August 4, 2016. (Pending referral to Assembly floor)

AB 2358 (Waldron/Gonzalez, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, executed August 4, 2016. (Pending referral to Senate floor)

AB 1977 (Wood, 2016) would ratify the first amendment to the 2006 tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Yurok Tribe, executed August 4, 2016. (Pending referral to Senate floor)

AB 1767 (Bigelow, 2016) would ratify the first amendment to the 2015 tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, executed on June 22, 2016. (Pending referral to Senate floor)

AB 1282 (Gray, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, executed on June 28, 2016. (Pending referral to Senate floor)

AB 629 (Gonzalez/Waldron, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Pala Band of Mission Indians, executed on May 6, 2016. (Pending on Assembly floor)

AB 291 (Atkins/Gonzalez, 2016) would ratify the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Barona Band of Mission Indians, executed on June 22, 2016. (Pending referral to Senate floor)

AB 795 (Atkins, Chapter 520, Statutes of 2015) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Sycuan Band of Kumeyaay Nation, executed on September 2, 2015.

AB 1540 (Gray, Chapter 531, Statutes of 2015) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, executed on August 26, 2015.

AB 315 (Bigelow, Chapter 512, Statutes of 2015) ratified the amended and restated tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the United Auburn Indian Community, executed on August 14, 2015.

AB 475 (Bigelow, Chapter 8, Statutes of 2015) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and Jackson Rancheria Band of Miwuk Indians, executed on February 1, 2015.

SB 1356 (De León, Chapter 314, Statutes of 2014) ratified the amendment to the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, executed on August 12, 2014.

SB 1224 (Correa, Chapter 300, Statutes of 2014) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Karuk Tribe, executed on December 4, 2013.

AB 1245 (V. Manuel Perez, Chapter 462, Statutes of 2013) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians located in Riverside County, executed on June 10, 2013.

AB 277 (Hall, Chapter 51, Statutes of 2013) ratified two new compacts entered into between the State of California and the following tribes: North Fork Rancheria, executed on August 31, 2012 and the Wiyot Tribe, executed on March 20, 2013.

AB 1267 (Hall, Chapter 6, Statutes of 2013) ratified the amended tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, executed on November 15, 2012.

SB 668 (Fuller, Chapter 67, Statutes of 2013) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Fort Independence Indian Community of Paiute Indians, executed on February 28, 2013.

AB 517 (Hall, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2012) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria of Sonoma County, executed on March 27, 2012.

AB 787 (Chesbro, Chapter 340, Statutes of 2012) ratified the amendment to the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, executed on July 25, 2012.

AB 1418 (Hall, Chapter 412, Statutes of 2011) repealed those provisions ratifying the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and Pinoleville Pomo Nation, executed on March 9, 2009 and instead ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Pinoleville Pomo Nation, executed on August 8, 2011. Ratification of this revised compact authorized the Tribe to operate up to 900 slot machines with up to 15% of the casino's net win from the slots designated for local communities, gambling mitigation and regulation, instead of requiring revenue contributions be made to the General Fund as provided by the 2009 compact.

AB 1020 (Chesbro, Chapter 27, Statutes of 2011) repealed the ratification of the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, executed on September 2, 2009, and instead ratified a new tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, executed on March 17, 2011. Ratification of this revised compact authorized the Tribe to operate up to 750 slot machines with up to 15 percent of the net-win from those gaming devices being paid to the SDF and the RSTF, instead of requiring revenue contributions be made to the General Fund as provided by the 2009 compact.

SB 89 (Budget Committee, Chapter 1, Statutes of 2010) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, executed on September 2, 2009.

AB 122 (Coto, Chapter 3, Statutes of 2009) ratified the tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Pinoleville Pomo Nation, executed on March 10, 2009.

AB 3072 (Price, Chapter 334, Statutes of 2008) ratified the first amendment to a tribal-state gaming compact entered into between the State of California and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, executed on June 30, 2008.

SB 106 (Wiggins, Chapter 37, Statutes of 2007) ratified a new compact between the State of California and the Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation (Yurok).

SB 174 (Ducheny, Chapter 39, Statutes of 2007) ratified the first compact amendment to the compact between the State of California and Sycuan.

SB 175 (Ducheny, Chapter 38, Statutes of 2007) ratified the first compact amendment to the compact between the State of California and Morongo.

SB 903 (Padilla, Chapter 40, Statutes of 2007) ratified the first compact amendment to the compact between the State of California and Pechanga.

SB 941 (Padilla, Chapter 226, Statutes of 2007) ratified the first compact amendment to the compact between the State of California and San Manuel.

SB 957 (Torlakson, Chapter 41, Statutes of 2007) ratified the first compact amendment to the compact between the State of California and Agua Caliente.

SB 470 (Ducheny, Chapter 527, Statutes of 2006) ratified the first amendment to the compact between the State and the Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation (Quechan).

SB 1117 (Burton, Chapter 856, Statutes of 2004) ratified two new and two amended compacts entered into between the State and the following tribes: Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians (new compact); Fort Mojave Indian Tribe (new compact); Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians (amended compact); and, Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians (amended compact).

AB 687 (Nuñez, Chapter 91, Statutes of 2004) ratified amendments to five compacts entered into between the State and the following tribes: Pala Band of Mission Indians; Pauma Band of Luiseno Mission Indians of the Pauma and Yuima Reservation; Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians; United Auburn Indian Communities; and, Viejas Group of Kumeyaay Indians. Also, provided for the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed \$1.5 billion by the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank and required the net proceeds of the sale of the compact assets to be deposited in the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund and the Transportation Deferred Investment Fund.

SB 930 (Burton, Chapter 802, Statutes of 2003) ratified a compact between the State of California and the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians.

SB 411 (Ducheny, Chapter 790, Statutes of 2003) ratified compacts between the State of California and the La Posta Band of Diegueno Mission Indians and the Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueno Mission Indians in San Diego County.

Proposition 1A (Adopted by the People of California on March 7, 2000) modified the prohibition against casinos and lotteries in the California Constitution to authorize the Governor to negotiate compacts, subject to legislative ratification, for the operation of slot machines, lottery games, and banking and percentage card games by federally recognized Indian tribes on Indian lands in California, in accordance with federal law. Authorized slot machines, lottery games, and banking and percentage card games to be conducted and operated on Indian lands subject to the compacts.

AB 1385 (Battin, Chapter 874, Statutes of 1999) designated the Governor as the state officer responsible for negotiating and executing compacts between the state and federally recognized Indian tribes located in the state. Also, ratified 57 compacts and created two special funds in the State Treasury (SDF and RSTF), as specified.

Proposition 5 (Adopted by the People of California on November 3, 1998) specified the terms and conditions of mandatory compacts between the State and tribal governments for class III gambling on Indian lands; amended California law to allow slot machines and banked card games at tribal casinos; provided for contributions to trust funds benefiting non-gaming tribes, statewide emergency medical care programs, and programs benefiting communities near tribes; and, allowed tribes to retain a monopoly on authorized gambling. Proposition 5 was found to be unconstitutional because it amended a provision of the Government Code and did not amend the Constitution. The proposition was invalidated in its entirety, save the final sentence of Government Code Section 98005, containing the state's consent to federal suits brought by California tribes pursuant to IGRA.

SB 287 (Burton, Chapter 409, Statutes of 1998) ratified 11 compacts negotiated between the State of California and Indian tribes that permitted class III video gaming devices on tribal lands and established a process for ratifying other compacts.

SB 8 (Lockyer, Chapter 867, Statutes of 1997) repealed the Gaming Regulation Act and enacted the Gambling Control Act of 1997. Established CGCC and charged it with, among other things, the authority to issue, deny, revoke, suspend, or impose conditions, restrictions, or limitations on licenses, permits, or approvals to ensure that unsuitable or unqualified persons are not involved in the operation of gambling. Established the Bureau of Gambling Control (formerly known as the Division of Gambling Control) within the Department of Justice and charged it with specified investigative and enforcement duties.