



TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

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ALL OF US TOGETHER

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CHAIRMAN

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR CONFIRMS TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION'S RIGHT TO TAKE LAND INTO TRUST

Nation Continues to Move Forward

SELLS, Ariz. – Today, the United States Department of Interior (DOI) approved the Tohono O'odham Nation's application to take land into trust. This decision by the federal government upholds Congressional legislation that was passed in 1986 in order to remedy the destruction of tribal land in the 1970s and 1980s. The land in question, which is in unincorporated Maricopa County, has been deemed to meet all requirements for it to become part of the Tohono O'odham Nation, according to the DOI.

Ned Norris Jr., Chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation, said, *"The decision by the Department of Interior is a major step in the process and I want to thank the Department of Interior, in particular Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk for his support and involvement in this application process. This property met all of the requirements of the law and the Department has acted appropriately to implement that law. The Nation believes that this puts us a step closer to the realization of an economic development project that is vital to the well-being of the Nation and that will make thousands of desperately needed jobs available to our neighbors."*

In the decision document, Assistant Secretary Larry Echo Hawk wrote, *"Our evaluation of the Nation's request indicates that the legal requirements under the Gila Bend Act for acquiring Parcel 2 in trust have been satisfied."*

During the application process the Nation continued to meet with local governments and communities. Work has been done to foster positive relations and begin the discussion on infrastructure needs, arrangements and agreements with local governments. Site plans are also currently being developed, taking into account community concerns, such as ensuring that the facility's entrance not interfere with future plans on Northern Parkway.

The Tohono O'odham Nation is a federally-recognized, sovereign tribe located in southern and central Arizona. The West Valley Resort is expected to create nearly 10,000 jobs and have more than a \$300 million annual impact. For information visit www.westvalleyopportunity.com.

Editor's Note: DOI's decision document is attached

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