



Tohono O'odham Nation Office of the Chairman & Vice Chairwoman

COMPASSION FAITH TRADITION RESPECT
T-I:BDAG 'AMJED S-WOHOCUDA HIMDAG PI:K 'ELID

Ned Norris, Jr.
Chairman

Wavalene M. Romero
Vice Chairwoman



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR REAFFIRMS DECISION IN FAVOR OF TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION'S WEST VALLEY RESORT PROJECT

SELLS, Ariz. – On Thursday, July 3, 2014, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) reaffirmed its decision that the Tohono O'odham Nation's West Valley property lies within unincorporated Maricopa County, a key requirement for taking the land into trust under the Gila Bend Indian Reservation Lands Replacement Act, and that therefore DOI must take the land in trust.

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had requested that DOI review its ruling on whether the Nation's property was located in an unincorporated county island. After a thorough review, DOI once again decided in favor of the Nation, the Nation's third straight favorable ruling from Interior.

Today's action by DOI represents a major step forward for the Nation in its quest to obtain reservation land to replace its Gila Bend reservation, which was illegally destroyed by the United States a generation ago.

The DOI ruling also underscores that H.R. 1410, proposed federal legislation that would block the Nation's planned economic development project for the replacement reservation land, would set a dangerous precedent by undoing the very rights that the United States has yet again confirmed in favor of the Nation.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Ned Norris, Jr. said, *"Today's ruling by the Department of the Interior allows the Nation to move another step closer to benefiting from the United States' promise to the Nation that we would be able to replace our destroyed reservation lands. The Nation is eager to move forward to use our replacement land to create thousands of new jobs in the West Valley."*

The Tohono O'odham Nation is a federally-recognized Indian tribe, with existing reservation lands in Maricopa County, Pinal County, and Pima County, Arizona. The West Valley Resort will be located at 95th and Northern avenues and will generate more than 3,000 new, permanent jobs and more than \$300 million in annual economic impact. For more information, visit www.westvalleyopportunity.com.

Editor's Note: Attached is a copy of the DOI decision.

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