



Tohono O'odham Nation

Office of the Chairman and Vice Chairman



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STATE CONCEDES THAT WEST VALLEY RESORT CAN MOVE FORWARD WITH CLASS II GAMING

Ruling acknowledges political pressure from state officials

SELLS, Ariz. – Today, U.S. District Court Judge David Campbell issued a ruling on the initial hearing in the Tohono O'odham Nation's effort to compel the State of Arizona to follow federal law regarding its Desert Diamond Casino – West Valley project.

In the ruling, Judge Campbell noted that *"The State readily concedes that it has no authority to regulate Class II gaming at the West Valley Resort."* This concession on the record resolves the Nation's most immediate concern: ending the state's intimidation campaign against workers and vendors who had been threatened with negative consequences for working at the facility.

The Nation moved to open its project as a Class II property because it was given little choice after Governor Doug Ducey and Attorney General Mark Brnovich sent letters pressuring the Arizona Department of Gaming (ADG) to refuse to work with the Nation on certifying the project as a Class III casino.

Judge Campbell noted that *"There can be little doubt that these letters influenced ADG's decision."*

This ruling addressed only preliminary matters. The Nation looks forward to the next phase of the litigation, with the next hearing set for Oct. 30, 2015.

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Edward Manuel said *"The Nation is comfortable with the court's decision today and we remain confident that the court will ultimately rule in our favor."* He added, *"We remain focused on creating jobs and economic opportunity in the West Valley as our project nears completion."*

Construction of the Desert Diamond Casino – West Valley at 95th Ave. and Northern Ave. is on schedule to open later this year. \$200 million has been invested into the construction of the first phase of the project. The casino will open with over 1,000 Class II gaming machines. Revenue from the new facility will be shared with local communities under the same formula used for other Arizona casinos. Hiring is underway, and a major job fair is scheduled for Sept. 27 – Sept. 28, 2015 to fill multiple positions at the new property.

Editor's Note: Attached is a photo of recent construction at the project site.

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