

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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November 4, 2025

Ryan Hunter, Acting Regional Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pacific Region Office
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2820
Sacramento, CA 95825

**RE: Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians 295.7-Acre Fee-to-Trust Project
Support for Alternative B or C**

Dear Mr. Hunter,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians (Tribe) 295.7-Acre Fee-to-Trust Project. In this project, the Tribe proposes to develop Tribal housing, an arena, other general commercial uses, a multipurpose emergency shelter, a maintenance operations building, parking garages, and associated infrastructure, while including two other alternatives.

The Environmental Assessment prepared by Acorn Environmental describes the proposed project (Alternative A) and two other alternatives:

- Alternative A consists of the fee simple conveyance of the project site into federal trust status for the benefit of the Tribe. This land trust action would shift civil regulatory jurisdiction over the project site from the State of California (State) and El Dorado County to the Tribe and the federal government. Federal laws, such as the Clean Water Act and the federal Endangered Species Act, would continue to apply to the project site. Alternative A includes: (1) an arena and parking garage; (2) residential development; (3) commercial development; (4) a multipurpose emergency shelter; and (5) maintenance operations buildings.
- Alternative B is similar to the Proposed Project but would include development of only the residential, multipurpose emergency shelter, and maintenance facility components. No commercial uses would be developed, including the proposed arena. All other aspects would be identical to Alternative A, including the conveyance of the project site into federal trust status, water supply and wastewater treatment and disposal, grading and drainage, and development standards. The proposed residential site plan for Alternative B would be the same as provided for Alternative A. The proposed southern development site

plan (multipurpose emergency shelter, and maintenance facility components) for Alternative B would be the same as provided for Alternative A, but would not include the commercial development.

- Alternative C is a no action alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the land would not be taken into trust and the Project would not be developed with new housing or commercial uses. Existing single-family homes are assumed to remain. The Tribe would likely still develop the proposed multipurpose emergency shelter and maintenance facility with the land remaining in fee. The project site would remain within the jurisdiction of El Dorado County and could be developed at some point in the future consistent with federal, State, and local requirements. However, future development would be speculative. It is therefore assumed for the purposes of the EA that the majority of the project site would remain undeveloped or minimally utilized under the No Action Alternative.

As discussed below, the County would only be supportive of Alternative B or C.

In previous comment letters sent to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the County expressed support for the use of the subject parcels for tribal housing that is consistent with the existing zoning and neighboring homes due to the current need within the tribal community. The County would like to see a commitment from the Tribe that the parcels intended for tribal housing, if placed into trust, would remain designated as tribal member housing as stated in the application and for the Tribe to provide notification and outreach to the surrounding neighborhood of proposed development on the parcels as part of its Good Neighbor Policy. It is important that the development of parcels for housing maintains compatibility with the residential character of the area surrounding the Rancheria lands. If the Tribe has the need to use the parcels for anything other than tribal housing, the County would like to engage in open and transparent conversations with the Tribe to determine what impacts the changes in use may have to the County services provided and how the Tribe and the County could work together to mitigate those impacts. It is important to note, the parcels containing the residential development and arena are currently accessed through private, gated roads that are maintained by a private road association, North Buckeye Rancheros Owners Association (NBROA). Placing these parcels into trust would reduce the revenues available to the NBROA for road and culvert maintenance.

With respect specifically to the arena and parking garage proposed in Alternative A, the County cannot be supportive of the incompatible use of residential parcels. An alternative that the County would support is that if the arena and parking garage were to be developed on a parcel or parcels that would not impact or greatly reduce the impacts to residents of the NBROA and surrounding neighborhoods. The County would like a commitment from the Tribe that no matter where the arena and parking garage are developed, ingress and egress to the arena and parking garage are restricted to the Casino's current ingress and egress via Highway 50. It is of the utmost importance that the private residential roads near the Casino are not used for commercial activity.

In previous Fee-to-Trust applications for the parcels included in this project, there was no mention of using the parcels for commercial activities. However, Alternative A includes commercial development for “typical neighborhood-serving retail and commercial businesses.” The parcels that include the proposed commercial development are zoned residential thus the commercial use would be incompatible with current zoning which the County does not support. As we have previously discussed with the Tribe, the west slope of El Dorado County has two main commercial districts, El Dorado Hills and Missouri Flat Road. We impressed upon the Tribe the importance of those districts to El Dorado County’s revenue. The County urges the Tribe to work with the County to allow for commercial development that supports our residents, both on and off tribal lands, while generating the revenues needed to serve the County’s residents and visitors with public safety services, road maintenance, et cetera.

As previously shared with the BIA, the County has major concerns about the Fee-to-Trust process and how the nearby residents and general public are not notified nor engaged in the process. There are possible negative impacts to surrounding neighbors and communities when lands are placed into trust and no longer subject to County zoning, community standards, and/or participation in private road associations. The County would like to see outreach to the neighboring communities be a part of the process for the BIA and the Tribe to ensure open communication and the development of goodwill between the Tribe and neighboring residents as well as allowing for a more productive exchange of ideas. A great example of the collaboration between the Tribe and neighbors surrounding the Tribe’s land was the gas station project. Tribal leaders engaged and sought feedback from the local residents through multiple meetings to receive input on the project.

The County of El Dorado acknowledges and respects the Tribe’s sovereignty and its right to purchase and develop land under federal law. That said, the County hopes that the Tribe will continue to be a good neighbor recognizing that as two sovereign entities, we coexist on land that we mutually utilize. It is critical that the County and the Tribe continue to communicate in hopes we reach a mutually agreed upon understanding of the County’s responsibilities and limited resources to provide essential services that all County residents, including Tribal members, depend on for their health, safety, and well-being. The County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors thanks you for your consideration of our comments. Should you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Alison Winter, Principal Management Analyst, via email at alison.winter@edcgov.us.

Sincerely,

George Turnboo
Chair, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors