NMIGA
NEW MEXICO INDIAN GAMING ASSOCIATION

Native American Gaming is Working, For All of Us.

February 4, 2008

Representative Nick J. Rahall
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 LHOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

On behalf of the New Mexico Indian Gaming Association, we want to express our strong opposition to H.R. 3048, a bill that would allow the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan to settle a proposed land claim and build a gambling facility, and H.R. 2176, a bill that would allow the Bay Mills Indian Community of Michigan to settle a proposed land claim and build a gaming facility more than hundreds of miles from their current reservation.

Passage of these bills would set a significantly negative precedence for the future of Indian gaming. These bills would circumvent the established procedures at the Department of Interior and provide a basis for tribes to take land into trust hundreds of miles from their reservations to compete with other Indian Tribes on their homelands and other non-Indian businesses.

Not only does H.R. 3048 and H.R. 2176 undermine IGRA, but also the authority of the State of Michigan in negotiating the placement of the casinos. IGRA requires the approval from a state governor when land is taken into trust for a tribe to conduct off reservation gambling. H.R. 3048 and H.R. 2176 directly circumvent this provision for State input.

The passage of this bill could create a situation in which tribes threatened the authority of the IGRA, the concerns of state governments, and the economies of tribes who completely abide by IGRA and their state compacts. With this, we strongly urge you not pass H.R. 3048 and H.R. 2176.

Sincerely,

Charles Dorame, Chairman
New Mexico Indian Gaming Association

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