



AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS
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February 19, 2025

The Honorable James C. Ramos
California State Assembly
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 221 (Ramos) - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Ramos,

On behalf of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, I am pleased to write in support of AB 221, a vital piece of legislation that will assist the vast majority of California tribes. AB 221 would streamline the existing Tribal Nation Grant Fund (TNGF) process to provide annual equal distribution grants to all federally recognized tribes that either have no gaming (“nongaming”) or operate less than 350 Class III gaming devices (“limited gaming”).

After months of discussions and statewide meetings, tribal leaders agreed on the need to change state law to simplify and streamline the TNGF grant process. Under AB 221, eligible tribes who apply would receive annual equal grants of \$600,000, or at least 85% of the available moneys in the fund - a nearly 55% increase in revenue-sharing payments to eligible tribal governments. This funding would support vital tribal programs including effective self-governance, economic development, housing, vocational training, tribal education, public health and safety, renewable energy, water conservation, cultural preservation, and scholarships.

AB 221 would augment the existing \$1.1 million distribution from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund (RSTF), pursuant to tribal-state gaming compacts, by \$600,000 or more per year. From 2000 through the fourth quarter of 2024, gaming tribes have contributed more than \$1.8 billion in RSTF payments to eligible nongaming and limited gaming tribes. pursuant to state law, TNGF monies must be used exclusively for tribal purposes, thus AB 221 will not result in new costs to the State.

For these reasons, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians strongly supports AB 221 and thanks you for your authorship of this legislation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Reid D. Milanovich
Chairman, Tribal Council
AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF
CAHUILLA INDIANS