



February 18, 2025

Assemblymember James C. Ramos
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 221 (Ramos) - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Ramos,

On behalf of the Cahuilla Band of 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 federal 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 reached consensus on the need to change state law to simplify and streamline the TNGF grant process. This new streamlined system would provide equal annual grants, paid quarterly, to all eligible federally recognized nongaming and limited gaming tribes that apply. 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 is vital for economically disadvantaged tribes as it would provide a consistent equal distribution grant from the TNGF would help stabilize funding for eligible tribal governments. This 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 tribal-state compacts. Notably, 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 Cahuilla Band of Indians strongly supports AB 221 and thanks you for your authorship of this legislation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Erica Schenk (Feb 18, 2025 16:34 PST)

Erica Schenk
Chairwoman
Cahuilla Band of Indians