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PRESS RELEASE: Sacramento and Fort Yuma, California (September 30, 2002)

GOVERNOR DAVIS VETOES INDIAN SACRED PLACES BILL

But Vows to Stop Proposed Glamis Imperial Mine

Late this evening, California Governor Gray Davis vetoed the state sacred places bill, SB 1828, but expressed strong support for the Quechan Indian Nation's struggle to defeat the proposed Glamis Imperial mine. SB 1828 would have required public agencies to avoid or mitigate damage to Native American sacred places. The Governor has signed SB 483 which requires open pit mines near Indian sacred places in protected areas of the California desert to be completely backfilled to reduce environmental damage.

In his veto message, Governor Davis wrote that, "The protection of sacred sites is a matter that must be addressed. Accordingly, I am directing my Secretary of Resources and my Director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to work with the proponents of this measure and others to introduce a bill next year that meets these concerns.

I would also note that I have signed Senate Bill 483, which protects Native American sites from the adverse environmental effects of proposed mining operations. I am particularly concerned about the proposed Glamis gold mine in Imperial County, and I have directed my Secretary of Resources to pursue all possible legal and administrative remedies that will assist in stopping the development of the mine."

"We are disappointed that the bill has been vetoed but heartened that the Governor has unequivocally stated in his veto message that he is committed to defeating the mine," stated Mike Jackson, Sr., President Quechan Nation. "We have so much support throughout the state and nation - and we will continue this battle to protect our sacred areas from desecration and destruction. By all means, this is not over with the Quechan people. We put our hearts and lives into this issue and we will continue to do so."

The bill was supported by over 50 California tribes, over 30 state and national organizations and according to a recent poll, over 74 percent of likely Davis voters. It was passed by a strong bipartisan vote and wide margins of 4:1 in the Assembly and 3:1 in the Senate. Business and real estate interests did not object to efforts to stop the mine, but were concerned about the protections proposed for other sites throughout the state.

"We look forward to working with Governor Davis and his administration to stop the mine once and for all," said Courtney Ann Coyle, attorney for the Tribe. "We also look forward to working with the legislature and the Governor to revisit the legislation to craft a bill capable of protecting other irreplaceable sacred places in California," she said.

"We are grateful for the legislative leadership demonstrated by Senators Burton (D-San Francisco) and Sher (D-Stanford) and Assemblymen Leonard (R-San Bernardino) and Nation (D-San Rafael) and for the support of the other California tribes," said Coyle.

To view 1828 veto/483 signing message, click here to download a Microsoft Word file.

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In other news -

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT FLAGRANTLY BREAKS TRUST RESPONSIBILITY TO QUECHAN TRIBE

Determines Glamis Gold's Mining Claims Valid on California Indian Day

In a surprise move, the Department of Interior's DC office approved the validity exam for the highly controversial proposed Glamis Imperial mine last Friday. This action was taken just days before Governor Gray Davis was to act on SB 1828 and 483, the California Indian sacred places bills. In an extremely insensitive move, BLM's announcement was made on California Indian Day, traditionally a holiday and day of celebration for all California Indians. Tribal Governments are closed throughout the state for this holiday.

"Friday's action is another black eye for the Norton Interior Department in living up to its trust responsibilities to Indian people," said an outraged Mike Jackson, Sr., President of the Quechan Nation. "Once again, despite promises to the contrary, we are learning about Interior's actions from a press release and after-the-fact notification ---- not meaningful before-the-fact government-to-government consultation as we were repeatedly promised by BLM and Interior and as is required by Executive Order 13007."

"Interior's action was premature - and a slap in the face of the state legislature, the U.S. Senate and the tribal government," said tribal attorney Courtney Ann Coyle. "Even the wording of the press release saying that 'BLM looks forward to meeting with the Quechan Tribe' is an insult to the Tribe and the process. BLM should be ashamed of its perversion of the consultation mandate. Friday's determination is just another example of corporate over-reaching and federal giveaways to corporations at the expense of tribes and the environment."

Interior's announcement came on the heels of a hearing held last week at the House Natural Resources Committee on the federal sacred places bill in which the Quechan Tribe testified about their situation and Interior officials received tough questioning by Rep. Udall (D-New Mexico). The Interior witness, Mr. Chris Kearney, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, could not answer whether the Tribe had been consulted before the mine rescission. In fact, no such consultation occurred. Nor could the Interior witness answer whether Glamis and Interior met prior to the rescission. In fact, they did meet, and Interior is still withholding from the public the documents and

notes from those meetings. Nor could the witness demonstrate how Interior has been implementing Executive Order 13007 in the six years it has been in operation.

"We were just in DC last Wednesday and none of the Interior officials present discussed this announcement with me. They have shown no respect for tribal governments. They say one thing, then do another. Their word means nothing," stated Jackson. "The Tribe will take all steps required to protect its sacred places within the Indian Pass area. The United States Government has not changed in its march to destroy us - from the very beginning - and it continues today. Our people are unyielding and will continue to fight. We will take all steps to protect our culture and our traditions."

To view Senator Boxer's statement on the validity announcement, [click here](#).

To view the state bill, [click here](#):

To view the federal bill, [click here](#):

For high-resolution images of the Quechan Indian Pass area, [click here](#).

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