



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

July 13, 2010

The Honorable Beasley Denson
Tribal Miko
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
101 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350

Dear Miko Denson:

On behalf of the citizens of Mississippi, we officially convey to you our united opposition to the proposal of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) to expand gambling operations in Sandersville, located in Jones County. This proposal raises serious legal, health, and safety concerns that we feel must be addressed if we are to achieve our mutual goal of working together for the benefit of both the State of Mississippi and the MBCI.

While the proposed gambling operation has garnered little non-tribal support, we are also greatly concerned that this project lacks unified support within the MBCI. The Tribal Council voted to move forward with this project, but this vote was far from overwhelming. In fact, the Council narrowly approved the project by a favorable margin of one (8-7). Clearly, there is division within the MBCI.

Further, the state continues to review the legality of the MBCI's decision to move forward on construction of this gambling facility in Jones County. While we respect the sovereignty of the Tribe and its governance structure, the state's leadership has a responsibility to fully review all legal issues surrounding the expansion of gambling operations in the state. Allowing a gambling operation to be developed in the manner which the MBCI proposes to do will result in an economic drain on Jones County and the surrounding areas, which will necessarily have to shoulder the financial and personal burden of negative impacts resulting from this facility. This proposed gambling facility fails to meet the policy of the state to develop destination casino gambling, unlike the MBCI's developments in Neshoba County which provided the type of amenities – such as a golf course, water park, and restaurants – needed to ensure the developments are consistent with state policies.

While this gambling operation will provide no direct tax benefit to the local areas, it will greatly increase the usage of the state and community infrastructure, resulting in additional financial burdens on our governments. The county roads and aging bridges near the proposed gambling site are not equipped to meet the higher traffic volumes that will be realized if this operation is constructed, which poses a severe health and safety risk not only to our citizens but also to the members of the MBCI who live in this area. As stewards of taxpayer dollars and advocates for a positive quality of life for our citizens, we are dedicated to ensuring state resources are used prudently and beneficially particularly in these difficult economic times.



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On behalf of the State of Mississippi, we implore you to reconsider your decision to expand gambling operations into Jones County. This move is uniformly opposed by state leaders, including at the local level, and we believe continuing to move in this direction will deteriorate Tribal-State relations. As the state's elected leadership, we hope to be able to find ways to work together that have a positive impact on both of our communities. After all, together we can overcome these challenging economic times and enhance the quality of life for all our citizens.

Serving Mississippi Together,

Handwritten signature of Haley Barbour in black ink.

Haley Barbour
Governor

Handwritten signature of Phil Bryant in black ink.

Phil Bryant
Lieutenant Governor

Handwritten signature of Stacey Pickering in black ink.

Stacey Pickering
State Auditor

Handwritten signature of Delbert Hosemann, Jr. in blue ink.

Delbert Hosemann
Secretary of State

Handwritten signature of Tate Reeves in black ink.

Tate Reeves
Treasurer

Handwritten signature of Mike Chaney in black ink.

Mike Chaney
Commissioner of Insurance

Handwritten signature of Dr. Lester Spell, Jr. in blue ink.

Dr. Lester Spell
Commissioner of Agriculture