



September 3, 2025

President pro Tempore Senator Mike McGuire
and Members of the California Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to AB 831

On behalf of the Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria, I am writing to express our strong opposition to California Assembly Bill 831. This legislation proceeds without genuine consensus from California's tribal communities, has moved forward absent comprehensive tribal consultation, and jeopardizes our sovereign authority to develop legitimate revenue sources essential to our community's welfare.

Tribal nations in more remote regions face distinct economic development obstacles and cannot match the scale or market advantages of wealthier, more well-established casino operations in metropolitan areas. Measures like AB 831 would curtail promising digital commerce avenues that represent critical supplementary income sources for tribes.

AB 831 exemplifies this problematic dynamic, as it would effectively close off emerging revenue opportunities that could help level the playing field for economically disadvantaged tribal communities. Digital commerce platforms such as online social games with sweepstakes promotions present crucial pathways for tribal diversification beyond conventional gaming revenues, enabling funding for vital community services: medical care, educational programs, housing initiatives, nutrition security, and cultural preservation efforts. The need for economic opportunities for our people cannot be overstated:

- Approximately 28% of individuals in California's tribal communities experience poverty, nearly double the statewide rate of 15%
- Tribal housing faces a crisis with 40% of Native American households experiencing overcrowding, compared to 8% of all California households
- Food access challenges affect up to 3 in 4 tribal community members in rural areas, significantly exceeding California's overall food insecurity rate of 11%

The current gaming landscape in California has created a stark economic divide among tribal nations. While a handful of tribes with prime locations and massive casino operations generate hundreds of millions in annual revenue, the majority of California's tribes, particularly those in rural and remote areas, struggle with limited income, gaming or otherwise. This disparity has resulted in a two-tiered system where wealthy gaming tribes can afford to lobby for policies that protect their market dominance, while smaller tribes are left with fewer pathways to economic sustainability.

Mechoopda Indian Tribe



of Chico Rancheria

Prohibiting legitimate, regulated digital enterprises will exacerbate these existing disparities, compromise tribal self-determination, and contradict California's stated dedication to supporting economic equity across all tribal nations. We respectfully request California's leaders reject AB 831 and instead pursue policies that support economic opportunities for all tribes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Knight, Vice Chair
Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria