

Don Adams

From: Sarah Thompson
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2019 9:46 AM
To: Bill Green; Bryant Morehead; Chad Simons; Debbie Coffey; Derek Roland; Don Adams; Jason Burrell; Josh Ward; Joy Garland; Kevin King; Kolleen Begley, Mayor; Mark Pullium; Nathan Clark; Paige Dowling; Randy Wiggins; Rebecca Garland; Regina Mathis; Rob Hites; Steve Hooper; Summer Woodard; Susan Morgan; Tracy Rodes; Zelerie Rogers
Cc: Richard Sneed; Paxton Myers; Rebekah Young; C. B. McKinnon; Cal Stiles; Clay Logan; Dale Wiggins; Thomas A. Long; Kevin Ensley; gaylewoody@jacksonnc.org; Boyce Dietz; Ronnie Beale; Roger Parsons; Harry Baughn; Zeb L. Smathers; Gail Mull; Jim Trantham; Dann D. Jesse; Michael Fitzgerald; Lynda Sossoman; Bob Scott; Patrick Taylor; Tom Sutton
Subject: Resolution regarding Catawba Casino
Attachments: Signed Memo (Catawba).pdf; County Resolution Template (EBCI).docx

Good morning managers,

EBCI Principal Chief Sneed addressed the Southwestern Commission board this past Monday night about federal legislation that has been introduced to allow a South Carolina tribe, the Catawba Nation, to operate a casino in Cleveland County NC. County Commissioners and Mayors present at the board meeting offered to bring a resolution against this legislation before their boards, in support of the EBCI.

Attached is a memo from Chief Sneed, as well as a resolution template.

All elected officials who were in attendance at the Commission board meeting are copied on this email, as well as Chief Sneed, his Chief of Staff Paxton Myers, and assistant Rebekah Young.

Thank you,

Sarah

Sarah Thompson
Executive Director
Southwestern Commission
125 Bonnie Lane
Sylva, NC 28779
office:(828)586-1962 x212
mobile:(828)508-1796
www.regiona.org

Email correspondence subject to NC Public Records Law



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

Principal Chief Richard G. Sneed

Vice Chief Alan B. Ensley

March 28, 2019

Adam Wachacha
Chairman
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

Dear Commission Members,

David Wolfe
Vice-Chairman
Yellowhill Township

I want to declare my sincere gratitude for the deep concern that was expressed by members of the Southwestern Commission at our most recent Board meeting. I appreciate the opportunity to engage in discussion regarding matters that could significantly impact the economic progress of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians as well as our surrounding counties.

Tribal Council Members

Tom Wahnetah
Yellowhill Township

Bucky Brown
Snowbird &
Cherokee Co. Township

The current bill introduced by Sen. Lindsey Graham, if passed allowing land into trust for the Catawba Indian Nation for gaming purposes, could lead to many disadvantages that will affect the workforce in our region as well as the programmatic stability for services offered to county residents.

Richard French
Big Cove Township

Perry Shell
Big Cove Township

I am pleased that the EBCI can work with the Southwestern Commission in a collaborative effort to enhance the economic success and sustainability of our seven surrounding counties of Western North Carolina which include Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain.

Bo Crowe
Wolfstown Township

Jeremy Wilson
Wolfstown Township

In support of this effort, a template resolution has been attached which you may amend as needed. Once complete I would like to request that a copy of the resolution be forwarded to Gov. Roy Cooper, Sen. Thom Tillis, Sen. Richard Burr, each member of NC House and Senate, as well as all US Congressional Delegates for NC.

Lisa Taylor
Painttown Township

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact my office at (828) 359-7002.

Tommye Saunooke
Painttown Township

Albert D. Rose
Birdtown Township

Sincerely,

Boyd Owle
Birdtown Township

Richard G. Sneed

Principal Chief, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

TEMPLATE

**OPPOSITION TO
CATAWBA INDIAN NATION CASINO IN NORTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS, [INSERT NAME OF COUNTY] County is a county located in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, counties in Western North Carolina have historically fallen well below national and state averages for wages, unemployment, education and other socio-economic metrics; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians owns and operates Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in Cherokee, North Carolina, and Harrah's Cherokee Valley River in Murphy, North Carolina (collectively referred to as "Cherokee casino resorts"), which are located in Jackson and Cherokee Counties in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts had an estimated economic impact of \$750 million in North Carolina in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts have an impact on the economy of Western North Carolina in the form of employee compensation, local supplier purchases, cash distributions to fund Tribal operations, as well as distributions to individual Tribal members, each of which generates additional demands for goods and services provided by small business owners in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts have enabled the Tribe to make investments in Western North Carolina, including an additional \$330 million in financed capital investments by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are directly responsible for five percent (5%) of the employment, approximately 3,069 employees, in the far six Western Counties of North Carolina, and nearly ten percent (10%) of employment for Jackson, Swain and Cherokee Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are indirectly responsible for an additional 5,411 jobs; and

WHEREAS, directly and indirectly, the Cherokee casino resorts have reduced the historically high unemployment rate in Jackson and Swain Counties, which was 1.87 times the state average through 1997; and

WHEREAS, prior to the establishment of the Cherokee casino resorts, seasonal fluctuations in unemployment in Western North Carolina sometimes peaked at seventeen percent (17%) or more, but since the casino resorts' establishment, fluctuations currently range from two percent (2%) to four percent (4%); and

WHEREAS, the average salary for direct employees of the Cherokee casino resorts is seventy-two percent (72%) greater than the average salary in the far six Western Counties of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, approximately \$129 million in direct wage and salary income to Cherokee casino resorts' employees and an estimated \$276 million in indirect wage and salary income generated by the casino resorts entered into the local economy; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee casino resorts-funded Tribal operations generated close to \$90 million in local spending and created more than 2,600 jobs in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, using resources stemming directly from the Cherokee casino resorts, has awarded more than \$93 million to further strengthen and diversify the regional economy; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina receives a revenue share from the Cherokee casino resorts in the amount of almost \$11 million annually; and

WHEREAS, other state and local taxes and benefits approach \$80-90 million, including income tax, sales tax, decline of unemployment benefits, occupancy taxes, etc.; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are responsible for bringing in approximately 5.2 million visitors to Western North Carolina each year; and

WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of the gaming revenues generated by the Cherokee casino resorts are from out-of-state visitors; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the employees of the Cherokee casino resorts donated approximately 123,000 hours to various non-profit organizations for value added near \$3 million; and

WHEREAS, S. 790, a bill to authorize the Catawba Indian Nation from South Carolina to build a casino in North Carolina, was introduced in the United States Senate on March 19, 2019; and

WHEREAS, S. 790 was introduced by South Carolina Senator Lindsay Graham, and co-sponsored by North Carolina Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis; and

WHEREAS, S. 790 would permit the Catawba Indian Nation to operate an off-reservation casino with electronic games without entering into revenue sharing agreements with the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, revenues from a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina would be felt in South Carolina where the Catawba Indian Nation is located; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina under S. 790 would result in fewer jobs offered by the Cherokee casino resorts and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal operations, thereby affecting the unemployment rate in Western North

Carolina, and the salaries, wages, and other investments recycled back into the local and regional economy; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina under S. 790 would result in lost investments and revenue in Western North Carolina and most of the Catawba casino revenues going to South Carolina casino developers and a South Carolina Indian tribe.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that [INSERT NAME OF COUNTY] County opposes S. 790, a bill that would permit the Catawba Indian Nation in South Carolina to open a gaming facility in North Carolina, and threaten the well-being of citizens and small business owners in Western North Carolina; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that [INSERT NAME OF COUNTY] County shall make its opposition known to North Carolina Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis and members of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, and requests the North Carolina Senators to withdraw their support of S. 790.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed on [INSERT DATE], 2019, by [INSERT NAME OF COUNTY] County Commissioners by a vote [INSERT NUMBER] Yeas to [INSERT NUMBER] Nays.

[INSERT NAME AND TITLE OF SIGNATORY]

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

L. KEVIN ENSLEY, CHAIRMAN
BRANDON C. ROGERS, VICE CHAIRMAN
J. W. "KIRK" KIRKPATRICK, III
TOMMY LONG
MARK PLESS



COUNTY MANAGER
BRYANT MOREHEAD

COUNTY ATTORNEY
FRANK QUEEN

**HAYWOOD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION
IN OPPOSITION OF CATAWBA INDIAN NATION CASINO IN NORTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS, Haywood County is a county located in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Haywood County and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have had a long supportive relationship both in governmental and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians owns and operates Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort in Cherokee, North Carolina, and Harrah's Cherokee Valley River in Murphy, North Carolina, which are located in Jackson and Cherokee Counties in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts had an estimated economic impact of \$750 million in North Carolina in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts have an impact on the economy of Western North Carolina in the form of employee compensation, local supplier purchases, cash distributions to fund Tribal operations, as well as distributions to individual Tribal members, each of which generate additional demands for goods and services provided by small business owners in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts have enabled the Tribe to make investments in Western North Carolina, including \$330 million in additional financed capital investments by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are directly responsible for five percent (5%) of the employment, approximately 3,069 employees, in the six western counties of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are indirectly responsible for an additional 5,411 jobs; and

WHEREAS, directly and indirectly, the Cherokee casino resorts have reduced the historically high unemployment rate in Jackson and Swain Counties, which was 1.87 times the state average through 1997; and

WHEREAS, the prior to the establishment of the Cherokee casino resorts, seasonal fluctuations in unemployment in Western North Carolina sometimes peaked at seventeen percent (17%) or more, but since the casino resorts' establishment, fluctuations currently range from two percent (2%) to four percent (4%); and

WHEREAS, the average salary for direct employees of the Cherokee casino resorts is seventy-two percent (72%) higher than the average salary in the six western counties of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, approximately \$129 million in direct wage and salary income to Cherokee Casino resorts' employees and an estimated \$276 million in indirect wage and salary income generated by the casino resorts entered into the local economy; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee casino resorts-funded Tribal operations generated close to \$90 million in local spending and created more than 2,600 jobs in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, using resources stemming directly from the Cherokee Casino resorts, has awarded more than \$93 million to further strengthen and diversify the regional economy; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina receives a revenue share from the Cherokee casino resorts in the amount of almost \$11 million annually; and

WHEREAS, other state and local taxes and benefits approach \$80-90 million, including income tax, sales tax, decline of unemployment benefits, occupancy taxes, etc.; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee casino resorts are responsible for bringing in approximately 5.2 million visitors to Western North Carolina each year; and

WHEREAS, almost three-quarters of the gaming revenues generated by the Cherokee casino resorts are from out-of-state visitors; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the employees of the Cherokee casino resorts donated approximately 123,000 hours to various non-profit organizations for value added near \$3 million; and

WHEREAS, S. 790, a bill that may allow the Catawba Indian Nation from South Carolina to build a casino in North Carolina, was introduced in the United States Senate on March 13, 2019; and

WHEREAS, S. 790 was introduced by South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, and co-sponsored by North Carolina Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis; and

WHEREAS, S. 790 would permit the Catawba Indian Nation to operate an off-reservation casino with electronic games without entering into revenue sharing agreements with the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, revenues from a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina would impact South Carolina where the Catawba Indian Nation is located; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina under S. 790 would result in fewer jobs offered by the Cherokee casino resorts and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal operations, thereby affecting the unemployment rate in Western North Carolina, and the salaries, wages, and other investments recycled back into the local and regional economy; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of a Catawba Indian Nation casino in North Carolina under S. 790 would result in lost investments and revenue in Western North Carolina and most of the Catawba casino revenues going to South Carolina casino developers and a South Carolina Indian tribe.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Haywood County opposes S. 790, a bill that would permit the Catawba Indian Nation in South Carolina to open a gaming facility in North Carolina, and threaten the well-being of citizens and small business owners in Haywood County and Western North Carolina; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Haywood County, by this resolution, opposes Catawba casinos and requests that North Carolina Senators Richard Burr and Thom Tillis and members of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee withdraw their support of S. 790.

Adopted the 1st day of April, 2019.

ATTEST:

Clerk to the Board

Chairman, Board of Commissioners