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**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
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June 6, 2017

Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson  
State Capitol, Room 2032  
Sacramento, CA 95814

***RE: Assembly Bill 653 (Ridley-Thomas) – Tax Exemption for Tribal Property held in Fee - OPPOSE***

Dear Senator Jackson:

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to state our opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 653 introduced by Assembly Member Ridley-Thomas. The Board of Supervisor’s adopted a 2017 Legislative Platform principle that opposes the loss of existing revenues including property tax revenues.

AB 653 appears to:

- Specifically exempt tribes from paying property taxes after a Fee to Trust Application Notice of Decision is rendered by the federal Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs,
- Conflict with the California Constitution Section 1(a), Article XIII that provides that all property is taxable unless otherwise provided within the California Constitution or federal laws, and
- Make no provision for reimbursing counties for lost property tax revenue resulting from this exemption in spite of existing state mandate law.

State laws which would exempt the payment of property tax for tribe-owned properties prior to the exhaustion of appeals and a final decision from the Department of Interior establishes a very bad precedent and disrupts the federal regulatory scheme governing fee-to-trust decisions.

If you have questions about the Board’s position, please contact the County’s Legislative Coordinator, Dennis Bozanich at 805-568-3403 or dbozanich@countyofsb.org.

Sincerely,

Cliff Berg  
Governmental Advocates, Inc.

cc: Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, 35th Assembly District  
Assemblymember Monique Limon, 37th Assembly District  
Members, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors  
Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Dennis Bozanich, Legislative Coordinator, County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors