

Gov. Rick Snyder allowing Fruitport Township casino project to advance to federal level

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 12 October 2013 20:45 -

FRUITPORT TOWNSHIP, MI – The proposed Little River Band of Ottawa Indians casino in Fruitport Township received a major breakthrough today with the announcement by tribal and state leaders that the proposal is moving on for federal review.

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and state Sen. Goeff Hansen, R-Hart, announced today that Gov. Rick Snyder has agreed to their request to allow the proposal to be reviewed by U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

A tribal official confirmed that the announcement was made to membership this afternoon.

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians has proposed constructing a \$100 million casino-centered development on the former Great Lakes Downs racetrack site in Fruitport Township. The tribe purchased the former racetrack land in July 2008.

In a statement released on Saturday, Hansen said he appreciated Snyder for honoring his request that he permit the U.S. Department of Interior to begin its review of the tribe's Fee to Trust Application.

"I've had regular contact with the governor about this project and made him aware of the significant local support, the economic development benefits, its positive impact on Muskegon County and the region," Hansen said.

If approved, the proposed development would also include stores, hotels and a larger anchor retail facility and be located near the Lakes Mall.

Hansen noted that the action begins the first part of "an information gathering process" of a project that could lead to new tax base, significant job creation and additional economic activity in Muskegon County and the surrounding region.

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"I appreciate the tribe's willingness to partner in the renewed growth of Muskegon County by investing in its future," he said.

Hansen acknowledged the work of Muskegon County leaders, who lined up local operating agreements with tribal officials and have actively advocated for the project, which stalled due to Snyder's initial opposing the project.

The tribe, which currently operates the Little River Casino and Resort in Manistee, owns 233 acres at and around the former Great Lakes Downs site south of I-96 and east of U.S. 31.

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