

Jerry Brown signs casino deal with Karuk tribe

Written by Administrator

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SACRAMENTO -- California's second-largest Indian tribe could soon have its first casino under a deal signed by Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) .

The new compact allows the Karuk tribe to build and operate a gambling hall with up to 1,500 slot machines on a 10-acre parcel the tribe owns in Yreka, near the Oregon border. The group is also planning an adjacent 80-room, 48,000-square-foot hotel.

The deal, which must be ratified by the Legislature, is the latest gambling accord signed by Brown, whose recent pacts have come under fire from lawmakers, other tribes and anti-gambling activists.

In a statement this week announcing the Karuk agreement, Brown said it would bring a much-needed spark to one of the most economically depressed parts of the state. It would also give the tribe "additional means to promote the healthcare, educational, natural resource and other needs" of its 3,700 members, he said.

Under the terms of the accord, the tribe must give 10% of the profits it reports from the casino to a state fund that distributes money among tribes that do not own gambling facilities. That is similar to other gambling deals Brown has negotiated.

A deal approved by the governor and lawmakers earlier this year to permit a new casino for a Central California tribe is the subject of a statewide referendum set for November. A competing tribe collected signatures to place the repeal effort on the general-election ballot.

That compact, with the [North Fork](#) Rancheria Band of Mono Indians, would allow the tribe to build a casino on newly acquired land near the city of Madera. It raised objections from tribes worried that it would encourage "reservation shopping" among Indian groups looking for prime locations for new casinos — which might compete with established gambling sites.

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Another agreement, between the governor and the Enterprise Rancheria for a casino in Yuba County, has stalled in the Legislature amid strong opposition from many Democrats for similar reasons. That proposal would allow a casino with 2,000 slot machines near the town of Marysville, about 35 miles north of Sacramento.

The Karuk tribe acquired the land where it now wants to build a casino in 1987, with help from a federal grant. Last year, the tribe received permission from the National Indian Gaming Commission to put a casino on the land if a deal could be reached with the state.

Calls to Karuk leaders seeking comment were not returned.

anthony.york@latimes.com

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