



Fresno Bee Letters to the Editor

**FRIDAY,
AUGUST 1, 2008
'Suspicious Connections'**

The Bee has really gone overboard in its bias against the North Fork Rancheria's proposed casino and in singing the praise of Senator Dean Florez.

We've grown accustomed to seeing Bee editorials, Florez Op-Eds, and attack ads from other local gaming tribes that use oddly similar words and arguments united against the North Fork Project.

But the 7/20 edition of the Bee went one step further, containing both a Jim Boren editorial extolling the wonders of all things Florez as well as a Florez Op-Ed containing insights and suggestions (investigate the BIA?) that frankly seem to have come straight from Chukchansi's lawyers.

Given Florez' continued misrepresentation of the North Fork project and the Bee's pandering to both the Senator and local gaming tribes, one has to wonder who is scratching whose back, and where the Chukchansi Tribe and their lawyers stand in stirring all this up?

Florez and the Bee receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in political contributions and lucrative advertising from wealthy gaming tribes - conflict of interest anyone?

Perhaps Florez is right: there should be an investigation - of the close connection between Chukchansi, Florez, and the Bee, not the BIA.

Rosanne Bonilla and Nora Salazar, Madera realtors and businesswomen

**SUNDAY,
August 3, 2008
'Take care of his own'**

As a resident of Madera County, I have a hard time understanding why Sen. Dean Florez - who represents Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare counties -- is so adamantly against economic development in Madera County. It seems he should be focusing specifically on helping his constituents.

According to a recent study, "The Measure of America," Fresno and Kern counties have the worst poverty, poor health and school dropout rates in the nation -- worse than Appalachia, worse than post-Katrina New Orleans, worse than the most remote Ozark villages.

Why would Sen. Florez want to derail the \$2.5 billion North Fork Rancheria's economic development project for Madera County which would benefit the North Fork tribe, Madera County citizens, and beyond -- maybe even Florez's own district as well -- for years to come?

As The Bee recently correctly reported, Sen. Florez is a headline grabber. But I'm beginning to wonder if the money he receives from other gaming tribes (especially as he prepares his war chest to run for lieutenant governor) doesn't influence his better judgment as well. He should stay out of Madera business and take care of his own.

Richard Farinelli, Co-Chair, Business Coalition for Building a Better Madera

**FRIDAY,
AUGUST 8, 2008
'Florez wrong on casino'**

Sen. Dean Florez's recent commentary about the proposed North Fork Rancheria casino completely misrepresents the level of local support for the project.

If Sen. Florez had stayed for the full length of the environmental impact statement hearing last March (he dropped into the six-hour hearing just long enough to stand on his soapbox and then leave), he would have realized that the North Fork project has the strong support of Maderans.

At the hearing, a wide variety of local community members, politicians, chambers, business leaders, Madera citizens and tribal members spoke in favor of the project.

Conversely, those opposing the project were mostly other local gaming tribes' officials or members who oppose the project for obvious reasons. A very small percentage were those morally opposed to all gambling.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognize the strong local support for the project, represented by favorable poll results, signed agreements with Madera County, the city of Madera and the Madera Irrigation District, the support of every chamber of commerce in Madera County, and nearly 5,000 individually signed support documents.

Next time, Sen. Florez should stick around long enough to get his facts right.

Steve Mindt, Madera City Council Member