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## **NORTH FORK RANCHERIA SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH MADERA IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

*The 20-year agreement includes mechanisms to offset water-related impacts of proposed development*

MADERA, Calif., December 19, 2006 – The North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians (“Tribe”) today signed a memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) with the Madera Irrigation District (“District”) to offset potential impacts to water resources in the District. This voluntary agreement was negotiated to ensure that potential water issues – including those that affect the agricultural community – are adequately addressed if the Tribe’s proposed destination hotel and casino resort is built. The Tribe is proposing to develop the project within the District’s service area.

Highlights of the agreement include: annual contributions in lieu of lost taxes and for aquifer recharge; monitoring of water usage and additional offsets in the event that the resort’s water use exceeds usage criteria; recognition of neighbors’ Right to Farm; and the creation of a Water and Agricultural Advisory Committee to promote local agriculture.

“In the spirit of cooperation, we want to closely work with the District to ensure that the water resources vital to local agriculture and communities are not adversely affected by our proposed development,” said Elaine Bethel-Fink, Tribal Chairperson. “We want to continue to be responsible and sensitive to agriculture and the surrounding community’s needs so the development benefits everyone.”

“The District is pleased to have an agreement in place that provides effective mechanisms for protecting our water resources,” said Ron Pistoresi, District Board President.

“The 20 year agreement is another example of the many steps MID is taking to plan for the long-term water needs of our farmers and others in Madera County. While we are not taking a position on the proposed development, we understand and look forward to a constructive, cooperative relationship with the Tribe should the project be approved and constructed.”

The term of the agreement is for 20 years with automatic extensions and complies with all local, state and federal requirements pertaining to Indian gaming. The terms and conditions are separate from MOUs negotiated with the City and County of Madera.

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