



PUEBLO OF SANTA CLARA

**ECONOMIC & RURAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

OCTOBER 10 & 11, 2013

GOVERNOR J.BRUCE TAFOYA

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GOVERNOR BRUCE TAFOYA

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Bruce Tafoya, Governor for the Pueblo of Santa Clara and I first want to greet you in Tewa and welcome you. It is indeed an honor to have the Pueblo host the committee and have you meet at a premier location, the cornerstone of our economic development efforts at Santa Clara Pueblo, the Big Rock Casino and Santa Claran Hotel. We have this great looking building...and there is no doubt that it stands out. It has been a real economic benefit not only to my pueblo, but also to Espanola and the surrounding communities. But I would have never imagined that the pueblo would have a facility like this...sitting just a few miles from where I grew up. I never imagined that gaming would become an everyday occurrence, a source of revenue, a source of entertainment, and a place to play, eat and rest.

I had mixed feelings during the early days when there was talk about building a casino and getting involved in gaming. I wasn't so sure about gambling and how it would affect us. I had heard the good and the bad about bringing gaming onto the reservation. But over the years, I have seen what it has done for our Pueblo, how we have benefited, how we have been able to provide jobs, not just for our tribal members but also for our non-Indian neighbors. We have been able to support tribal government and pay for programs that care for our very young and the very old in our community. We have been able to literally grow our future by sending our children and grandchildren off to college. There is no doubt the benefits are real.

You know, in our prayers, especially during our traditional ceremonies, we ask those forces that are much more powerful than ourselves to protect and provide. We ask that our People prosper, that they never go hungry, and that they are never lacking. We ask that our lands and our water be protected and that all living things flourish.

I think in many ways gaming has been the answer to our prayers. I look back to all the economic development ventures that the Pueblo ever tried and attempted. As leaders, we all wished and hoped for a way to provide jobs and a steady income for our families. The only thing that seems to have worked and has been successful has been gaming. It has become a source of revenue and a steady source of jobs.

You know the casino and the hotel have become a reflection of who we have become...a blending of a modern day, successful, economic business venture with traditional cultural design and decorative art. The casino and resort hotel are located on Santa Clara soil. They should be a reminder to those who visit and work here that we are People who have been able to carefully balance both the Indian and non-Indian worlds...it should be a reminder that we are a proud People, a sophisticated People, an intelligent People...a People with the capabilities and the talents to run multi-million businesses yet never forget who we are and what made us who we are...the traditions, the culture and belief systems that defined us and made us uniquely Santa Clara.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee I want to give you a brief history of Santa Clara. Our community across the river is called the Village of the Roses or as we say in our language, Kha'p'oo Owinge. This village has been our home for centuries. Before moving here we lived at Puye Owinge, also known as the Puye Cliffs about 7 miles east of here. Our tribal government is unique. Over a span of 400 years, three sovereign governments, Spain, Mexico, and the United States have recognized that we are also sovereign. Our land base covers over 57,000 acres; the majority is undeveloped forest and grasslands. Santa Clara Pueblo operates under a tribal Constitution, which has been in place since 1935. In 1994, we became the first tribe in New Mexico to enter into a Self-Governance Compact with the federal government. The agreement allows us greater control over the use of federal funds. But despite all the historic changes that have occurred, we have been able to maintain our language, our traditions and our culture.

Mr. Chairman, it's always a pleasure to have legislative committees come onto tribal lands and meet. I believe it gives lawmakers a chance to visit our Native communities and see for themselves what makes our communities so unique. It also provides an opportunity for tribal leaders to share our issues and concerns with our elected Representatives and Senators.

Before I get started with my formal testimony, I'd like to thank Rep. Debbie Rodella for convincing the Committee to meet here at Santa Clara. Rep. Rodella represents us and has been a very good friend and a strong supporter of Native issues. I know many of you have come from different parts of the state, representing New Mexico's diverse population. I hope your two-day hearing is successful and generates meaningful outcomes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Mr. Chairman I want to begin by talking about the economic development efforts on my Pueblo, which includes this Hotel and Casino. As you know, we are considered a gaming tribe. We entered into our most recent gaming compact with the state back in 2007, but we have been in the gaming industry from the beginning. We have enjoyed tremendous benefits from gaming and so has the state through our revenue share agreement. Last year, according to the Net Win figures provided to the state, we paid the state of New Mexico just over \$2 million dollars in revenue share dollars, which goes into the General Fund that you, as lawmakers, control.

But we also share some of the taxes we collect here at Santa Clara with the state. Since 1998 we have had a tax sharing agreement with the state. We give 25% of the Gross Receipts Taxes we collect to the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department. We collect these taxes on all business conducted on our reservation. This agreement allows the legislature to reap some benefits from the business activity on tribal lands.

Like many businesses across the state and around the country we have had to deal with a sagging economy. Disposable income has been at an all time low. We haven't seen a consistent flow of visitors into the Big Rock casino, as we would like if the economy was much healthier. As you know, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, if we do well, the

state does well. Those revenue share dollars from our gaming enterprise keep flowing into your coffers.

In 2010, we completed construction of the Santa Claran hotel in hopes of capturing some of the tourist traffic. I think you would agree that it is a beautiful facility. I am glad you are able to see firsthand the multi-million dollar business activity that has taken place here at Santa Clara. We have worked very hard to bring together the capital, the expertise and vision to make all of this happen. I want to acknowledge our business enterprises, the CEO, the board of Directors of the Santa Clara Development Corporation. They have done an outstanding job despite all the economic challenges.

Mr. Chairman, the Committee needs to know that we employ hundreds of people in our business enterprises, which includes the Santa Claran hotel, the Big Rock casino, a bowling alley, retail outlets, including the restaurant, the travel center, and our tourist center at Puye Cliffs. We have over 390 employees, many of them non-Indians who pay state income taxes and who shop off reservation, paying gross receipts on their purchases. Additionally, we employ another 200 individuals at our tribal government complex. We provide a very good benefits package to our workers and we believe we have contributed immensely to the local economy, taking pride in considering ourselves one of the largest employers in the Espanola Valley.

While we have had a great start, especially with our recent addition to our business enterprises, the Santa Claran hotel, it's been a real challenge maintaining a good occupancy rate. In addition to the economic challenges, we have had to deal with the ones that are beyond our control. The Las Conchas fire in 2011 impacted our business and tourism efforts, shutting down Puye Cliffs during the peak season and limited activity on our world-class golf course. Now with the recent flooding, the ability to attract visitors to our enterprises has been affected, once again. So what this means is that our business enterprises haven't had the kind of return we would like to see. We depend on tourism like many Native communities, but that too has been down, especially after the fire. Travel to northern New Mexico has been light.

But I want to let the Committee know about the support the Pueblo has provided the community during times of disaster. We offered up our hotel to those affected by the flooding. We created an evacuation center, setting up cots and fed families affected by the devastating floodwaters. We did the same thing during the Las Conchas fire. We set up a medical triage area and offered another staging area to feed hundreds of people whose lives and property were affected by the fire.

EDUCATION:

Mr. Chairman I want to touch on a few more topics, including one that I have been very concerned about for many years and that's Education. The Pueblo of Santa Clara places a high cultural value on education. However, the Pueblo is extremely concerned with the high drop out rate, low-test scores and low graduation rate of Santa Clara students attending public schools, including schools within the Espanola School district. We support the district's efforts to provide and continuously improve the kind of the education students from Santa Clara should receive by implementing programs that help

insure that my students are prepared to meet educational and lifelong challenges. However, we remain equally concerned with the lack of appropriate Native curricula, technological resources, language preservation efforts and qualified teachers, all of which are needed to ensure that Santa Clara students receive basic and advanced learning skills necessary to prepare them for higher education opportunities.

The Pueblo also has concerns regarding the use of the 25% set aside in federal Impact Aid dollars. As Tribal leaders we believe there is a need to find solutions for the effective use of Impact Aid to educate our Native children. Every year millions of dollars are fed into the state of New Mexico for Indian Education; however, when it comes to addressing the issues and educational needs of Native American children their needs often go unmet. Federal law requires that local education agencies (LEA) work directly with Native Communities to ensure that the best education is provided to Native children; however, State agencies often do not provide the support Indian Communities need.

The Indian Education Act needs to be reauthorized to include powerful language that stresses Federal mandates with penalties for Local Education Agencies if they fail to comply with established Federal mandates. Furthermore, the law should state that federal dollars generated for the education of Native American children should be spent directly on educational services benefiting Native American children.

Like the state, we wish to create a highly skilled, well-educated, literate workforce. With a pool of qualified workers, we believe we can better attract business and economic development possibilities, create well paying job opportunities, and assure that our tribal members enjoy a prosperous future that comes with being well educated. Education and Economic Development go hand in hand. The theme here at the Santa Clara Development Corporation is "Creating a Sustainable Future for our Children." And that includes education.

Here at Santa Clara support sound Native American educational programs; compliance with state and federal statutes; high-quality instruction; effective professional teacher development and appropriate, culturally sensitive curriculum, including Native language instruction; support comprehensive oversight of the flow of funds and the implementation of policies that effectuate meaningful change. Lastly, we fully support tribal and parental involvement.

CAPITAL OUTLAY & TRIBAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND:

One of the last topics I want to touch on is Capital Outlay and the Tribal Infrastructure Fund or TIF. Here in New Mexico, tribes, including Santa Clara Pueblo, are located primarily in rural areas of the state and, in many cases, lack basic, adequate, and modern day infrastructure. This lack of infrastructure includes many things that most people in New Mexico and the United States take for granted including running water and adequate sewer lines, paved roads, electricity, and telephone lines, not to mention access to the Internet.

As a result, this lack of infrastructure often contributes to a poor quality of life in many tribal communities, but in addition, it has led to the inability of tribal governments to

attract jobs and economic development efforts on tribal lands. However, we are aware that over the past 18 years, the State of New Mexico has worked with tribes and Pueblos to address the lack of infrastructure by encouraging tribes to access state capital outlay funds. Since then, tribes have been able to secure various means of financing tribal infrastructure including:

1. Tribal Infrastructure Fund
2. Water Trust Board
3. New Mexico Finance Authority and
4. New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority.

The passage of the Tribal Infrastructure Fund (TIF), using senior severance bond capacity, was a major achievement for the state and tribes. Whereas in prior years the TIF allocation was unpredictable, the new allocation has provided a continuous stream of funding for tribal infrastructure. However, the Severance Tax Bond allocation for TIF was never intended to be the sole source of tribal infrastructure funding. There is a need for the state to allocate other funding, including capital outlay, in order to increase infrastructure opportunities.

We recently submitted our Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan to DFA. In the plan we are seeking funding for several projects including the following:

1. A storm and surface water control project. This is in response to the extensive flooding and damage that has occurred on our tribal lands. We are asking for \$3 point 9 million dollars.
2. Another proposed project is to upgrade our waste water system. We plan on carrying this out in phases. Phase One has been funded, but now we need over \$15 million dollars to complete the remaining four phases. Many of the service lines are more than 50 years old.
3. We also need funds to upgrade the tribe's aging water system. Again, we want to phase this project in over a 5-year period. The first two phases have been funded. But we need funds for the remaining work. The estimated cost is over \$8 million dollars.

As I have mentioned before, many of New Mexico's tribes including Santa Clara contribute significant amounts to the State's General Fund through Gaming Revenue Share payments, severance tax from oil, gas, and coal activity, state payroll taxes, and Gross Receipts Tax agreements. Tribal businesses and economic enterprises also contribute to the state's economy. In addition, tribal members also contribute through personal spending and payment of Gross Receipts Taxes.

As I struggle to find ways to finance large projects in my community, I think about the millions of dollars that Santa Clara alone contributes to the state. As a tribal leader, I have to account for the funds my administration spends. I have to account for the dollars my tribal council appropriates. I often let my community know how tribal funds are being used. In light of that, I would like to respectfully request an itemized, accurate

accounting of the funding that each tribe annually contributes to the state's coffers. In an age of accountability and transparency, it is important for tribes, the Executive, state agencies, and local legislators to be aware of how much the state receives and uses in tribal funds. I also think it is important and appropriate to quantify how surrounding non-Indian communities prosper from tribal dollars and tribal enterprises.

NATURAL DISASTERS:

Mr. Chairman, I also want to inform the committee about the tremendous impact the recent rains and flooding has had on my community. While the rains have been a blessing, something we all prayed would help end the drought, it was especially trying for us here at Santa Clara. As you know, the village sits below the largest burn scar as a result of the 2011 Las Conchas fire. When the rains came in July and September of this year, there was no way to hold back the floodwaters in an area we call Santa Clara Canyon. We suffered some major damage and we are now in the process of cleaning up debris, repairing access roads in tribal forestlands, fixing bridges, spillways, and repairing damage to private homes. But at the same we have received a large amount of federal aid. We have injected those dollars into the local economy. The pueblo has hired a lot of local companies and businesses to help with the recovery efforts. In fact we hired a local excavation company here in Espanola and awarded them a rather sizeable contract. The company in turn has been able to hire folks, pay good wages and put food on the table of many of our families, both Indian and non-Indian. And that's just one company...we have hired others to assist us. So, the rains have been a blessing in disguise for many of our communities.

CLOSING:

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to share my vision for Santa Clara with the Committee. As a Pueblo people we share, but we also benefit from what other cultures have to offer. Likewise, we offer other cultures, our unique Native culture, without compromising our values.

As the Governor, I have to address many pressing challenges, concerns and issues everyday. Regardless, here's what keeps me going.

In my vision I see Santa Clara as a place

- Where my People occupy all their traditional homelands,
- Where we practice self-determination and are respected as a sovereign nation, and have a sincere, honest, respectable relationship with all local, state, federal and world governments
- Where the culture, traditions and way of life are practiced by all tribal members through the way we live, raise our family and teach our children,
- Where Tewa is the language spoken by all,
- Where we have a quality of life like no other place in the world,
- Where all tribal members have access to the finest medical care and attention,
- Where there is no poverty,

- Where the elders of our tribe are honored and are always able to pass down their knowledge to the young and the children in our pueblo,
- Where all our people have the opportunity to live on the pueblo and work in fulfilling, well paying jobs,
- Where all tribal members have a safe place to live and raise their families,
- Where educational opportunities are available to all, and
- Where tribal members are given the opportunity to nurture and share their intellectual gifts with other tribal members, the entire country, and the world.

With that, I will close Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Santa Clara Pueblo

“Village of Wild Roses”



SANTA CLARA PUEBLO is a federally-recognized Indian Tribe located in northern New Mexico, approximately 27 miles north of Santa Fe and one mile from the nearby city of Española. With a population of 2,800 people, it is located one mile from the confluence of the Rio Grande and Santa Clara Creek. Santa Clara possesses a land base totaling 57,000 acres, including two patented Spanish land grants, an Executive Order Reservation and various reacquired lands held in trust by the federal government. These lands range from 5,500 feet in elevation in the Rio Grande Valley to nearly 11,000 feet in the Jemez Mountains. The vast majority of the reservation is undeveloped forest and grasslands, including the Santa Clara Canyon. In the 1930's the Pueblo Lands Board awarded over 4,000 acres of land within the Santa Clara Spanish land grant to non-Indians, resulting in a checkerboard pattern of land ownership in the northern and eastern portions of Santa Clara's grant.

WE HAVE LIVED in our aboriginal territory since time immemorial. We formerly lived at Puje Owinge or “village near where the rabbits gather,” also known as Puje Cliff Ruins, from time immemorial to about 1300 AD. Around then our ancestors relocated seven miles to the east to our present village of Kha'p'oo Owinge or “village of wild roses.” Our ancestors survived our first encounters with the Spanish conquistadors in 1598 and have handed down to us our Tewa language, traditions, dances and culture.

OUR PUEBLO'S GOVERNMENT is unique and has been recognized by three different sovereign governments of the past 400 years; Spain, Mexico and the United States of America. Our tribal leaders still carry the canes that were presented to our ancestors by the Spanish and Mexican governments, as well as similar canes presented to our ancestral leaders by President Abraham Lincoln after New Mexico was annexed by the United States. Our current tribal government operates under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Pueblo of Santa Clara, New Mexico, approved December 20, 1935, under the Indian Reorganization Act. Our tribal government consists of 6 annually-elected tribal officials; Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Interpreter and Sheriff and 8 Tribal Council representatives selected by the 4 recognized tribal parties. Consisting of 34 programs and over 170 employees, the Santa Clara tribal administration provides a full-range of services to our community members.

IN 1994, the Pueblo became the first tribe in New Mexico to enter into a Self-Governance Compact with the federal government, allowing us greater control over the use of federal funds to provide programs and services.

Santa Clara Pueblo
PO Box 580, Española, NM 87532
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Vision Statement



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In my mind, I keep a picture, a vision of what Santa Clara will be like. This vision for the Pueblo drives every decision I make.

Santa Clara Pueblo

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