

Opinion: Brown is wrong to expand tribal gaming

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Gov. Jerry Brown waited until Friday's deadline to announce his support for two controversial off-reservation casinos that are likely to usher in a troubling new Indian gambling boom in California.

It's unfortunate that Brown blessed these two bad deals initially approved by the Obama administration's Interior Department. The first allows the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians to build a casino along Highway 99 in Madera County, 40 miles from their existing reservation near Yosemite. The second allows the Enterprise Rancheria of the Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe to build its casino near Oroville, 50 miles from its historic tribal lands. The governor approved that casino even though residents of Yuba County signaled in a 2005 advisory vote that they did not want it.

Both casinos were opposed by established gambling tribes, who argue they will not generate new revenue but take profits from existing casinos. The most troubling aspect of Brown's decision is that it adds pressure to approve off-reservation casinos for other tribes.

When voters approved Proposition 1A a dozen years ago, they were promised gambling would be contained on existing Indian lands and that the expansion authorized by the initiative would be modest.

That's turned out to be a lie. Today, California has more than 60 Indian casinos, some of them quite massive. Gambling tribes rake in close to \$7 billion annually, more gambling revenue than in any other state in the nation.

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