

Federal judges deal mixed hand to tribe's bid for Amador casino

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON – Federal judges far from California dealt a mixed hand this week to a long-debated casino proposed for the Amador County foothills near Ione.

On Tuesday, a top appeals court rejected the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians' bid to intervene in a lawsuit challenging federal approval of the casino. Tribal leaders had wanted to intervene so they could defeat the underlying lawsuit through a powerful claim of sovereign immunity.

The unanimous, 10-page decision Tuesday by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit means a trial judge can rule on the merits of a challenge filed by Amador County more than nine years ago.

But while the ruling Tuesday was a bit of a blow to the Buena Vista Rancheria, a Supreme Court decision issued Monday helped the tribe.

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