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Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' Muskegon Co. Casino Project reaches new Milestone in Federal Approval Process

Washington, D.C. — The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' Muskegon County casino project is taking a significant step forward in its approval process. Tomorrow, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) will formally publish a [Notice Availability of a Final Environmental Impact Statement \(FEIS\)](#) for the Little River Band's Fee-to-Trust and casino project at a former racetrack in Fruitport Township.

"This is an incredible step forward in our process to build the Muskegon County Casino Project," said Larry Romanelli, Ogema of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. "This project is about job creation for our community and I want to thank everyone – our steadfast community, our federal and state leaders, labor unions, and Tribal members for their support for this project."

In the FEIS, the BIA considered both the Little River Band's proposed casino project and a range of economic development alternatives, and concluded that the Little River Band's project as proposed is the preferred alternative of the federal government. A public comment period will soon be instated after which the Federal government will issue its final decision on the application. The process then moves to the State of Michigan for concurrence of Governor Whitmer and action by the Legislature.

The Muskegon County Casino Project is slated to bring approximately 3,000 jobs to the region that include 1,500 high paying full-time jobs and 1,500 construction and ancillary jobs. The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is building this casino with internal financial resources and no taxpayer dollars but is expected to generate economic development of \$15 million in tax revenue for the State of Michigan and millions more for local governments.

The Little River Band has been working on this project for more than 10 years. The Tribe filed an application in February 2015 requesting the BIA place 60 acres of land in trust for a \$180 million casino and economic development project. The BIA published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in November 2018 followed by a public hearing and comment period.

The Tribe has extensive historical ties to traditional land in the Muskegon region with Muskegon County being home to the Little River Band's largest population base. Muskegon County is also one of the Little River Band's service areas and the Tribe has long maintained governmental offices in Muskegon to serve its large number of local members.

"The Tribe plans to develop a casino on our traditional land in Muskegon County so we can serve our largest population of tribal citizens in our service area," said Tribal Council Speaker Ron Pete. "A casino in Muskegon County will enable the Tribe to provide jobs, housing, health care, education and other services to our elders and youth. It will also provide a very positive economic impact for the Muskegon community."

The Little River Band's proposed gaming and economic development would include:

- Approximately 69,000 square feet of gaming floor space
- 1,700 slot machines
- 35 table games
- 220-room hotel
- Event and meeting room space
- Dining and entertainment options

As part of the EIS, the BIA reviewed potential environmental impacts of the casino project, including land use, geology and soils, water resources, agricultural resources, biological resources, cultural resources, traffic, air quality, noise, public health/environmental hazards, hazardous material and waste, public services and socio-economics. A public comment period following the publication of the FEIS is forthcoming and will be announced by the Federal government. Visit www.littlerivereis.com for more information.

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