

Message from Tribal Chair Stephanie Bryan on behalf of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians

Dear Fellow Tribal Members,

As your Tribal Chairman, I wanted to share with you what is being done to secure our Tribe's economic future in the wake of discussions about expanding gaming in Alabama.

In the past few weeks your Vice Chairman and Government Affairs head, Robbie McGhee, and I have had several meetings with elected officials in Montgomery about our role in helping solve the State's budget crisis. I want to outline what is currently being proposed and put the issues at stake in a broader context.

Just about every solution that lawmakers discussed in our meetings (and in other meetings where we weren't present) involves our Tribal gaming operations, a lottery, and potentially opening up gaming elsewhere in the State, specifically at the privately owned race tracks.

We believe expanding gaming that way would threaten what we have worked so hard to build and could affect our economic stability and ability to provide benefits.

To ward off that expansion, it has been proposed that the Tribe make a one-time, upfront payment of \$250 million to the state that would help bail Alabama out of its current financial crisis. This payment is part of an overall strategy to limit gaming within the State, and it would not only benefit Alabama, but PBCI as well. These funds will have no financial impact on the services and benefits we provide to our members.

The media learned of some of the meetings and has reported the idea of the \$250 million bailout payment. But to be clear, nothing is final. We want to negotiate in good faith with the State, but we will not put our Tribe at risk in the process. To that end, we have told elected officials that we are under no obligation to enter into a compact – especially if our businesses are threatened by competition.

Our strategy now is to make sure that legislators and their constituents understand that the Tribe has a history of being a good corporate citizen and good neighbors. We can offer help to the Stat, but we aren't going to do that if the agreement in any way jeopardizes what we have already built and want to build in the future.

Stephanie A. Bryan, Tribal Chair  
Poarch Band of Creek Indians