



ALABAMA-COUSHATTA TRIBE OF TEXAS

571 State Park Road 56 • Livingston, Texas 77351 • (936) 563-1100

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 2, 2021

New Federal Proposal Would Protect Jobs at Naskila Gaming

(Livingston, TX) – The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (the Tribe) expressed support today for H.R. 2208, a newly filed bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would protect its Naskila Gaming electronic bingo facility from the state's efforts to close it.

H.R. 2208, known as the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act, would protect 700 jobs in East Texas and another 1,000 jobs in El Paso. It would allow the Tribe and the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo near El Paso to continue to offer electronic bingo by ensuring they are covered under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. This change would create parity with the only other federally recognized tribe in Texas, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.

Naskila Gaming is the second-largest employer in Polk County but has faced consistent opposition from Governor Greg Abbott and other state leaders attempting to close it.

"The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas is grateful to Congresswoman Escobar for providing the leadership we need to deliver fairness for our Tribal citizens and economic opportunity for our fellow Texans," said Nita Battise, Chair of the Tribal Council for the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. "This legislation has proven to have bipartisan support in Congress and we look forward to again working with members of both parties to protect nearly 2,000 Texas jobs."

The State of Texas has long worked in court to stop electronic bingo on the two tribes' land. Two years ago, the U.S. House unanimously approved H.R. 759. Authored by East Texas Republican Congressman Brian Babin, H.R. 759 would have put the two tribes under IGRA so they could offer electronic bingo. More than 70 business and community groups formally voiced support for the legislation, but it never received a vote in the U.S. Senate and died at the end of 2020.

"The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe is grateful for Congressman Babin's past and continued support and leadership in keeping Naskila Gaming open and protecting the 700 Texans who work there. As we begin this new push, we will again look to our community partners to voice their support to protect East Texas jobs," Chairwoman Battise said.

The Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act:

- Ensures that the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribes are covered by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) and creates parity with the only other federally recognized Tribe in Texas, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas.

- Would not expand gaming in Texas but would allow the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe to offer electronic bingo on their reservations.

“I am proud to introduce the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo and Alabama-Coushatta Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act to protect our Native American tribes’ sovereignty and ensure they have the ability to recover from the coronavirus crisis and rebuild their economies,” said Congresswoman Escobar. “Very simply, this bipartisan bill seeks parity. It will create long-overdue opportunity for our tribes and communities and I will do everything possible to ensure it gets to the President’s desk for his signature.”

##

For more information about the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, please contact Jason Embry at (512) 560-3876.