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A Tribal-State gaming compact between the Pala Band of Mission Indians and the State of California was approved Saturday, April 25, by Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover and will take effect when the notice is published in the Federal Register. "I want to stress that this compact applies only to the future gaming operation of the Pala Band of Mission Indians," said Assistant Secretary Gover. "The terms and conditions of this compact are binding only on the State and the Pala Band. Representatives of the State have confirmed that other California Tribes are free to assess whether the provisions of this compact are appropriate for inclusion in their compact with the State.

The State has an obligation under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) to negotiate in "good faith" with each tribe requesting a compact. Because circumstances vary from tribe to tribe, our approval of this compact cannot and does not mean that the State meets its obligation of good-faith negotiating merely by offering identical compacts to other tribes. Based on our conversations with representatives of the State, we do not expect that the State will insist on provisions that are not reasonable given the circumstances of other tribes."

During the review process, several amendments were made to the Pala compact and subsequently approved by the Pala Band and the State of California. The amendments address issues that arose during the review process. The Bureau of Indian Affairs' review of the compact concludes that the agreement does not violate IGRA, Federal law, or the Bureau's trust responsibility. The compact allows the Pala Band an allocation of 199 lottery devices that it can either operate itself or license to other tribes to operate.