



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

DEC 16 2021

The Honorable Larry B. Romanelli
Tribal Ogema
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
2608 Government Center Drive
Manistee, Michigan 49660

Dear Ogema Romanelli:

Thank you for your letter dated December 7, 2021, requesting a six-month extension for Governor Whitmer to consider and respond to the Department's December 16, 2020, affirmative Secretarial Determination for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to conduct gaming on 60 acres of land in Fruitport, Michigan. After we received your letter, the Office of Indian Gaming received a telephone call from the Governor's Legal Counsel, Mark Totten, who confirmed the Governor does not oppose or object to the Tribe's request for an extension.

Our regulations at 25 C.F.R. § 292.23(b) provide that if the Governor does not affirmatively concur in the Secretarial Determination within one year of the date of the request, the Secretary may, at the request of the applicant tribe or the Governor, grant an extension of up to 180 days. Accordingly, pursuant to the regulations and the Tribe's request, the Governor is granted an extension of 180 days to June 16, 2022.

The Department understands the importance of Indian Gaming and stands behind the December 16, 2020 Secretarial Determination which found that gaming by the Tribe on the Fruitport parcel is in the best interest of the Tribe and its members and not detrimental to the surrounding community. We understand that combatting the COVID-19 pandemic has required your full attention this past year. We hope that the additional time will allow the Governor and her staff time to consider this important matter.

A similar letter was sent to the Honorable Gretchen Whitmer, Governor of Michigan. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Paula Hart, Director, Office of Indian Gaming, at (202) 219-4066.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Isom-Clause
Deputy Assistant Secretary –
Policy and Economic Development