



From the EXECUTIVE CORNER



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CTBA LOBBYIST

GREEN LIGHT

California attorney general clears tribal sports betting initiative for signatures to meet the deadline for the November ballot.

A coalition of Californians has filed language with the attorney general to permit the voters to decide whether to allow legal sports wagering on tribal lands and at four private horse racing tracks in California, beginning in 2020. The AG issued the title and summary on Jan. 21, clearing the way for signature gathering to qualify for the November 2020 ballot.

In an unprecedented show of unity, the proposed initiative is supported by 18 of the state's most powerful

and influential tribal governments. The tribes are committed to putting the question before the voters, and they have hired one of the state's top firms to run the ballot campaign. The measure will also allow tribes to operate roulette and dice games.

Signature requirements are based on previous voter turnout, and for the 2020 ballot almost one million qualified signatures will be needed in the weeks ahead to allow the measure to qualify for the ballot. That means well beyond one million are necessary in order to assure the required number of valid signatures are collected.

The tribal language allows sports wagering at brick and mortar casinos and racetracks and prohibits wagers at card rooms or on the Internet. Card rooms have vowed to fight the tribal initiative and support efforts in the California legislature to approve a competing measure that would in-

clude card rooms and online wagers.

The California Thoroughbred Breeders Association has worked closely with the tribes to assure protections for consumers, underage gamblers, and California jobs, and to provide a safer, regulated environment and benefit the state. Allowing sports wagering to come out of the shadows will benefit Californians. Our efforts to move sports wagering preceded the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2018, and we have worked closely with the gaming tribes. Lawmakers will have until late June to overcome the diverse gaming interests, including card rooms and major league sports, to qualify for the November ballot.

This is certainly great news for California racing and could increase purses and increase track attendance. We will do all we can to help the tribal initiative and monitor all legislative efforts. **CTB**