

Arizona House of Representatives OKs bill to stop casino in Glendale - Arizona Republic

Written by Administrator

Tuesday, 25 January 2011 23:47 -

The Arizona House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday to stop a tribal casino near Glendale.

The measure now goes to the Senate, which could vote on an identical bill as early as today.

House Bill 2534 passed on a 39-21 party-line vote with the exception of Gilbert Republican Eddie Farnsworth, who sided with the Democrats.

The legislation

would allow Glendale to annex 54 acres owned by the Tohono O'odham Nation. The southern Arizona tribe in July received federal approval to place the land into the reservation system, clearing one of the hurdles to a planned a casino and resort. However, the decision wasn't settled as Glendale, the Gila River Indian Community and others filed legal challenge.

Rep. Anna Tovar, D-Tolleson, unsuccessfully sought an amendment to require a three-fourths city council vote to annex such property.

Farnsworth said upping the council vote from two-thirds to three-fourths would improve the bill.

Rep. Tom Chabin, D-Flagstaff, asked the bill's sponsor, Rep. Jerry Weiers, R-Glendale, if he changed the language requiring fewer council votes to reflect the change in makeup of the Glendale City Council. The November election replaced an incumbent casino opponent with a casino supporter.

Weiers said that was not his intention and that he didn't know anything about the newly installed council member. He said a two-thirds vote is normal practice.

The Tohono O'odham Nation questioned the measure's constitutionality.

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"The Tohono O'odham Nation will do everything that is necessary to protect our rights and the rights of all landowners, including Arizona's tribes," tribal Chairman Ned Norris Jr. said.

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