

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third Congressional District applauded President Obama’s signing of S. 3903 yesterday, which authorizes 99-year lease agreements for the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. After meeting with tribal leaders from Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo last year, Luján introduced a bill to authorize the tribe to enter into long-term leases and worked with New Mexico’s Senators to send the legislation to the President in the final moments of the 111th Congress.

“As a result of our hard work at the end of the Congress, this important legislation has now been signed into law,” Congressman Luján said. “By respecting the sovereign right of the people of Ohkay Owingeh to develop their own land and reducing barriers that had prolonged the process, the community will be able to take advantage of economic opportunities that will improve the well-being of their tribal members.”

The legislation provides Ohkay Owingeh with the ability to enter into 99-year lease agreements on their trust lands without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. This will open opportunities for business ventures that will benefit tribal members on their own land.