

Hoopa Valley Tribe addresses rodent infestation developments

By Lindsay Housaman, Jun 17 2016



HOOPA, Calif. -

The following release was issued Friday from the Hoopa Valley Tribe regarding the issue of rodent infestation at Ray's Food Place.

The Hoopa Valley Tribe was notified of an extensive rodent infestation in a building it leases to Ray's Food Place grocery store, which is owned by C & K Market, Inc., on June 10, 2016. In response, Tribal Chairman Ryan Jackson issued a statement to the Hoopa Valley community on Facebook on June 11, 2016, calling the conditions identified in a report by the Indian Health Service, "wholly unacceptable."

Members of the Tribal Council personally participated in on-site inspections of the facility on Tuesday, June 14. These representatives participated in order to assess the ongoing eradication efforts by Ray's Food Place and to ensure that any structural or maintenance issues that are the Tribe's responsibility are immediately addressed. Several relatively minor maintenance issues were identified and are being remediated.

Since being notified of the rodent infestation, the Tribe has also met with representatives of Ray's Food Place by phone and in person in order to resolve these issues and ensure the safety of the Hoopa Valley Tribe community. In addition to valuing its 40-year business relationship with Ray's Food Place, the Hoopa Valley

Tribe is also very concerned about losing the only grocery store within its community. A key issue discussed in these meetings was whether it was possible to eradicate the rodent infestation without temporarily closing the grocery store.

However, yesterday, the Hoopa Valley Tribe received Official Inspection Report Number DAOEMHKZO from the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services Division of Environmental Health, which indicated many of the rodent infestation issues had not been resolved despite significant efforts by Ray's Food Place to do so. After discussion with representatives of C & K Market, Inc. and government to government consultation with the Humboldt County Division of Environmental Health, the Hoopa Valley Tribe decided to support the county's recommendation that the store be closed immediately because the rodent infestation presents an eminent threat to public health and safety. The Hoopa Valley Tribe informed C & K Market, Inc. of its decision early yesterday afternoon.

Speaking today, Chairman Jackson said, "The Hoopa Valley Tribe is firmly committed to ensuring the safety of tribal members and the entire Hoopa Valley Community and has mobilized all the resources at our disposal to address and resolve this issue." In addition to addressing any structural or landscaping issues that may have contributed to the problem, the Tribe is currently reviewing options to ensure community access to fresh food and other groceries, including opening a temporary shopping facility as well as exploring the possibility of declaring a state of emergency in regards to food access.

The Hoopa Valley Tribe continues conversations with Ray's Food Place owners, C & K Market, Inc., about continuing their grocery store operations in Hoopa once the rodent infestation is eradicated.