

Washington state AUGUST 27, 2015

Supreme Court upholds deal on tribal gas stations

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
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SPOKANE, WASH. — The state Supreme Court has unanimously upheld a lower court ruling in a long-running lawsuit by non-tribal gas station owners challenging gas tax compacts negotiated in the past decade between the state and Indian tribes.

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that non-Indian gas station owners failed to prove that state payments to the tribes, which total about \$30 million a year, were not refunds for taxes paid on motor vehicle fuels.

Under the current system, tribes agreed to buy taxed fuel to sell in their gas stations and the state agreed to refund a portion of the fuel tax receipts to the tribes. The agreements over the past decade have provided tribes refunds equal to 75 percent of the tax on fuel bought by tribal gas stations.



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