



# Rio Nuevo

TUCSON, ARIZONA

400 West Congress, Suite 152 ~ Tucson, AZ 85701 ~ 520-623-7336 ~ FAX: 520-882-3699 ~ info@rionuevo.org

---

## For Immediate Release: **Rio Nuevo's Senate Bill Signed by Governor Brewer**

Organization: Rio Nuevo District Board

Contact: Michele Bettini, 520-623-7336

April 18, 2014

Tucson, Arizona - Senate Bill 1351, designed to create project flexibility for the State controlled Rio Nuevo revitalization district, passed the Arizona Senate and House without a single no vote. Governor Brewer signed the bill today and it will become law later this summer

The bill eliminates the hotel requirement placed in the 2009 legislation that stripped control of Rio Nuevo from the city and placed a state appointed board squarely in charge. That legislation required that the Rio Nuevo District not engage in any projects other than the convention center and a downtown area hotel. While the current board has complied with the convention center requirement by launching a multi-million dollar remodel of the aging Arena no one on the current board felt it was wise for Rio Nuevo to design, build and operate a downtown hotel.

The current board is focused on creating strategic partnerships with other jurisdictions and private developers in order to leverage the remaining TIF dollars to build out several vacant downtown parcels and enhance the Tucson Convention Center and adjacent developments.

The Senate and House, through multiple committee meetings and on the floor, agreed unanimously with the desire to allow Rio Nuevo to move away from the sole obligation to build a hotel. Under the new legislation the District board must focus on its primary project, which is the TCC, but will then be allowed to support other downtown area developments. The District now owns the so called Arena Lot, between Granada and Congress along the east side of the freeway and also will soon own multiple acres west of the freeway, in addition to the property surrounding the TCC complex.

The bill will also establish Rio Nuevo more along the lines of a State agency, reporting to the legislature annually, rather than every three years. Any project conceived by the Rio Nuevo board must be communicated to legislative leadership in advance and must be free of conflicts of interest, according to the new legislation.

“This is a major milestone for us,” said Fletcher McCusker, Chairman of Rio Nuevo. “We were basically handcuffed by the existing legislation. We will be developing a capital plan with the whole board but expect us to focus on strategic partnerships that create jobs and enhance the tax base”, McCusker added.

“To get a bill through the legislature with unanimous support is truly remarkable and, we believe, speaks to the new level of credibility established by the turnaround Rio Nuevo has enjoyed of the last couple of years,” he conclude.



# Rio Nuevo

TUCSON, ARIZONA

400 West Congress, Suite 152 ~ Tucson, AZ 85701 ~ 520-623-7336 ~ FAX: 520-882-3699 ~ [info@rionuevo.org](mailto:info@rionuevo.org)

---