



Mono Lake Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> Tribe

P.O. Box 237, Lee Vining, CA 93541

May 6, 2019

Mr. William H. Leonard  
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation  
4630 Ben Hur Road  
P.O. Box 186  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Mr. Leonard,

The Mono Lake Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> Tribe supports the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation's petition for federal acknowledgement. Traditionally and historically the Miwuk have been, and continue to be, recognized as a political and tribal community.

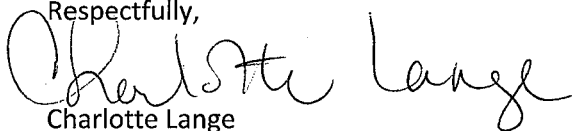
The Mono Lake Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> community is located in the Mono Lake Basin of eastern California. Today, most of the people live in or around the town of Lee Vining, either year around or seasonally. In the past, seasonal changes resulted in people and sometimes whole camps moving around the Basin and into the mountains. Yosemite Valley was one of these places. The Southern Miwuk also used this area where we traded pine nuts for acorns. Obsidian, basket materials, salt, paint and rabbit blankets were also traded. Miwuk people also came to Mono Lake to trade for kutsabi, the fly larvae, and for piagi, the moth larvae and sometimes even winter with the Kutzadika<sup>a</sup>.

Language differences separated the Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> people from the people from those of the Miwuk Nation, but did not seem to hamper any of the relationships. People were often fluent in Miwuk, Owens Valley Paiute, Shoshone, Washoe, and/or Bridgeport, Walker Lake and Northern Paiute.

During these trading times connections were made possible by major trails. The trails up Bloody Canyon to Tioga Pass went to Tuolumne Meadows, Tenaya and in Yosemite Valley. Celebrations being held in the past and today are the Yosemite Bear Dance, Acorn Festival, Mono Lake/Yosemite Walk, with descendants of both the Mono Lake Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> and Miwuk Nations.

Because of the Tribes historic presence in the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation their work with local federal agencies, we both are recognized as part of the Seven Affiliated Tribes working with the Yosemite National Park. Because of the important role their culture plays in the heritage of their region, the Mono Lake Kutzadika<sup>a</sup> Tribe supports their effort for federal acknowledgement.

Respectfully,



Charlotte Lange  
Chairperson

**REFERENCE Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA.**

*To the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs*

*Department of Interior/ Office of Federal Acknowledgment*

My name is Kat Anderson. I am a Research Associate in the Department of Plant Sciences at UC Davis and recently retired from the USDA. I have worked for many years with tribes in California, particularly those in the Sierra Nevada bioregion, documenting their detailed knowledge of plant uses and the practices they used to manage the pre-historical and historical forests, woodlands, and grasslands.

The first tribe that I worked with was the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation of the Yosemite region. I was invited up to Yosemite National Park by Yosemite National Park staff and encouraged to work with the tribe of the region—the Southern Sierra Miwuk at the Masters and Ph.D. level. The funding for my research in part came from the federal government. There was no question as to the Southern Sierra Miwuk's authenticity as a tribe. I worked with many individuals, impressed by the fact that many members of the tribe still lived in the region. I am very grateful for the elders' vast knowledge and encouragement. Tribal members generously took me to many areas of Yosemite Valley and other parts of the park, showing me the plants used for foods, medicines, and technologies of their ancestors and still gathered by them. They showed me meaningful geographic areas such as old village sites, processing sites, and sacred areas—recounting activities, stories, legends, and ceremonies of the tribe attached to place—a familiarity and love for the area that I fondly recall to the present day. But what moved me the most, was the great care that their ancestors took through indigenous burning, pruning, tillage, knocking, seed beating, and hand weeding in various areas of Yosemite National Park, making it worthy of national park status. Galen Clark, guardian of the Yosemite Grant, also documented these practices, as he lived among the Southern Sierra Miwuk people for many years.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk were instrumental in laying the foundation for the book that I later wrote and published with the University of California Press, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*. Among my research methods in addition to many interviews, was to read hundreds of unpublished and published documents, books, articles, and reports pertaining to the culture and history of the Southern Sierra Miwuk people spanning many years.

I am writing you today because I recently found out about the federal Proposed Finding against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation issued on November 16, 2018. When I first started working with the tribe in 1986, they were hopeful that their petition for recognition, filed in 1982, would be granted. They were positive about getting some of their beloved land back. They waited patiently, addressing every inadequacy in the petition over many years. Many of the elders that I worked with then have since died, never having seen their petition granted.

In the 1980s and 1990s I attended American Indian Council of Mariposa County Council meetings, the formal governing body of the tribe. After many years of interviews, and very in-depth scholarly research, there was no question that this body and tribal members were the direct descendants of the historical tribe and formed a distinct community. It is with great sadness that I recount meeting with Chairman Nick Brocchini in 1987, at that time so hopeful that Federal Recognition would come to pass, yet he never got to see the fulfillment of his most cherished dream.

As you know, the world in which countless generations of their ancestors lived was swept away with the coming of Euro-Americans and gold mining. Everything that the Southern Sierra Miwuk depended on and held sacred was challenged, destroyed, or taken, leaving them disenfranchised. The Proposed Finding is one more injustice piled on top of a long line of social and political injustices.

Other national parks in the Far West—such as Olympic National Park, Mt. Rainer National Park, Crater National Park, Redwood National Park, and Death Valley National Park—are managed with the active engagement of Federally Recognized Tribes—why not Yosemite?

I love Yosemite National Park, and so I have to ask myself: Who loved the land first? Who took care of it for centuries before my ancestors came here? A final report to Yosemite Fund in 2008, entitled “Status and Trends of Black Oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) Populations and Recruitment in Yosemite Valley” authored by two National Park Service ecologists, Bill Kuhn and Brent Johnson, concludes that Yosemite Valley is a *cultural landscape*. The millions of tourists who come to Yosemite Valley each year, and are moved by the tremendous vistas, the spectacular waterfalls, the black oak groves, and open meadows, have no idea that what they cherish is in part the result of centuries of Southern Sierra Miwuk care. These features are part of a cultural landscape that began to change when the Southern Sierra Miwuk could no longer burn the meadows, hand weed the cottonwoods, burn in the mixed conifer forests and oak groves, knock and prune the oaks, and practice the other management techniques that give Yosemite Valley its unsurpassed beauty.

I object to your recent ruling and ask that your Department reverse the current finding and issue a new Proposed Finding finally granting Federal Acknowledgment for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation that they so rightfully deserve after all these years.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss these comments in more depth.

Very sincerely yours,

M. Kat Anderson, Ph.D.  
Dept. of Plant Sciences  
One Shields Ave., Mail Stop 6  
University of California, Davis  
(530) 902-7182

RECEIVED  
JUL 14 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Nicholas Frank Ross-Rhudy  
P.O. Box 295  
El Portal, CA 95318

May 21, 2019

Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

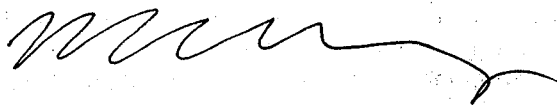
To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is in comment to the *Proposed Finding against Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation*, of November 16, 2018. I am writing to strongly encourage the Office of Indian Affairs to withdraw the Proposed Finding in order to recommence the period of Active Consideration of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation petition under the standard for unambiguous previous federal acknowledgement. I am certain that upon careful review and reconsideration, the Office of Indian Affairs will find that the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation's petition for Federal Acknowledgment is legitimate and deserving of approval.

I am a resident of the local area that is home to the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation. I was born in Mariposa, California, and raised in El Portal, California—an area that is part of the traditional homeland of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation. For the past 13 years I have worked in Yosemite National Park as an employee of the National Park Service. Throughout my life I have known many people who are the descendants of the historical Southern Sierra Miwok Tribe, and have had the great honor and privilege to accompany members of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation in some of their traditional ceremonies, including the Bear Dance and the Spiritual Walk in Yosemite National Park. As a member of the local community it is unmistakable that there is a clear continuity between the historical Southern Sierra Miwok Tribe and the present-day Southern Sierra Miwok Nation, that has not been broken in spite of the traumatic experience of colonization and the need to adapt to the many changes that were its result. In the face of great historical change, the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation has not lost its identity, traditional values and teachings, or sense of place. This fact has been extensively documented by National Park Service anthropologists over the course of many years.

The Southern Sierra Miwok Nation, like many other American Indian peoples in California and across the United States, has suffered untold wrongs due to the ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstandings that tainted the historical period during which their homelands were taken from them and they were forced to begin their fight for survival as a people. The Office of Indian Affairs now has an opportunity to take a step in the direction of righting some of those wrongs by fairly considering the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation's petition. I urge you to make the right decision.

Respectfully,



Nicholas Frank Ross-Rhudy



RECEIVED  
MAY 27 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

May 21, 2019

Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

On behalf of CASA of Mariposa County, I am honored to write a letter in support of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation in their petition for Federal Acknowledgement.

CASA of Mariposa County serves children and families who are in the foster care system in Mariposa County. We provide volunteers who advocate for children to be in a safe, loving and permanent home as quickly as possible. Federal Acknowledgement of the Southern Sierra Miwuk, would mean that children of this tribe would be granted ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) status in the courtroom in dependency cases. Without federal recognition, the children who come into the foster care system who are Miwuk are not granted ICWA status.


Without ICWA status, the culture and community of these children is often in jeopardy or ignored. Culturally sensitive services for the family are no guaranteed; tribal customary adoptions are not available; and foster home placement options are restricted to the small number of foster homes we have in the county.

Although we are a rural county with a small population, the Southern Sierra Miwuk are the second largest ethnicity in Mariposa County. Therefore, Federal Recognition of this large and active tribe would open up numerous culturally appropriate foster home placement options, as well as the potential for adoption into these homes.

When a child is removed from their home and placed into foster care they lose everything. It is absolutely essential that their culture is maintained, or this too will add to the trauma that the system is trying to stop.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk are a flourishing, active tribe both in Mariposa and Yosemite. Members of this tribe hold positions in the Board of Supervisors, are owners of local businesses, hold leadership positions in local for-profit and non-profit entities, and are community leaders. In every classroom in Mariposa County there are children who are members of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. It is an honor to have grown up in Mariposa County and now work for CASA of Mariposa County. I grew up knowing the history of this land and knowing that the grinding stones in our back yards were made by the ancestors of the South Sierra Miwuk children whom I went to school with. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation is overdue for Federal Acknowledgement and it is hurting the families and children we serve. Please grant them recognition.

Sincerely,

  
Izzi Stalder  
CASA Program Coordinator  
Alliance for Community Transformations  
209-742-4206

To: Department of Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement

From Robert Stanley Rust  
Subject:  
Letter of support Petitioner #82  
Southern Miwok Nation.

Hello I am Robert Rust writing you this letter in support of my people.

A little history on myself my father James Calvin Rust born in 1904 died in 1999 California roll number 55519 his mother Grace Hinks daughter of Maria Labrado Ydrte Daughter of Chief Tenya of the Yosemite Indians (Awhaneechi). So I'm just a few generations removed from Yosemite. Which I still call home regardless where I lay my head.

In Yosemite's visitor center you can hear my great grandmother's story of how soldiers came and burned the village. Then there are the pictures of her and my grandmother making baskets and manzinita cider in the cultural area . When I was a young boy in Yosemite Valley I remember in helping (Playing) in the rafters of the round house and umacha's (Bark houses) and the sweat lodge. That was around 1975. We still use these Dwellings today for ceremonies. And with any luck and work schedule I will be afforded the opportunity to help rebuild the old village (wahhoga).

Since leaving home in Midpines California (in Mariposa county) to go into the U.S. Navy from 1986-1995 I would still find a way to participate in our ceremonies when home on leave. Most of these ceremonies dates and time are like our language, Traditions, history, and folk lore are by word of mouth and are alive and well today.

Today my biggest task is teaching my six children our customs and our way and language. Being an aircraft mechanic on aerial fire fighting aircraft this can be a challenge with fire seasons getting longer every year but still find time to make ceremonies whether in Mariposa or in Toulumne California. Because Miwok is not where you are, it's who you are.

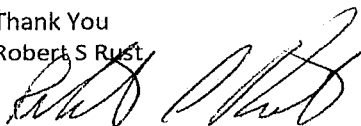
So on this subject of tribal recognition even though we have blended into today's society we are still here and thriving. Having the benefits of tribal recognition to help the elders of our community and the children which is our future is so important to me.

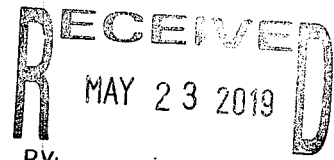
So how can you not recognize someone the United States had a war with (Mariposa Indian War)? Do we not recognize Iraq, Germany, Viet Nam, North Korea?

Or how can you not recognize a people that had an influence on a state's history? Or nations history by having president's and queens visit our home land and talk of the beauty of the land and it's people. Still today we are having an influence on our state and nation by who we are and what we do.

So in closing I'm attaching reports from LT. Tredwell Moore pacific division on the Mariposa Indian war. From the national park service site on Yosemite Indians, the surviving communities of which several are recognized along with a little piece on my Great Grandmother Which the park service recognizes. Copy of fathers California Indian roll number.

Thank You  
Robert S Rust





Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior

RE: Petition Number 082, Proposed Findings – Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

Greetings,

My name is Rick Quesnot and I am writing in regard to a petition submitted by the southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. The proposed findings demonstrate a clear lack of support for and understanding of what a community can go through over decades of time. The evolution of a state registered organizing body should only serve to show what the people felt they needed for their community at a given time (AICMC, SSM). The bureaucratic red tape process that people need to go through in order to get federally recognized status requires the people to get into the mindset of bureaucrats who do the job for a living day in and day out. Instead of approaching the matter with the mindset of understanding how a community develops and evolves, it seems a bureaucratic approach of attempting to seek out fraudulent activity with changing of names.

The matter of a spread-out membership with high numbers should be acknowledged as a positive. Being a descendant of a given area doesn't require someone to live there for their entire life or require future generations to do so. Furthermore, it is absurd to expect that roll would be taken at every given event, gathering, or act of goodwill. Who takes roll at a birthday party? On the occasion I have visited Christian churches I have never been asked to sign in. Additionally, many tribes have gone through various diasporas that were both created by and maintained by great difficulties rooted in the colonization and genocide of their lands and ancestors. This has resulted in people moving away from their ancestral lands in order to get by. The proposed findings seem to make it sound as if a distinct community involves someone being able to walk across the street and ask to borrow some sugar. People can actually be very spread out even in just the Yosemite and Mariposa County area.

A distinct community doesn't mean that every single member or even a majority will show up to each event sponsored and organized by the legally registered organization. A real community involves families who obviously have their own lives to live and manage. They may not go to every single event but they know that they can go and are welcome. They may go to some events one year and then not go to events for multiple years while still seeing other families in the membership on their own time outside of the events, without signing a legal document saying so, or even taking pictures. Indeed, the proposed findings seem to list everything that makes the SSM a distinct community while using an absurd and vague definition that is head achingly ethnocentric in nature.

To the matter of the activity of the community, I can testify myself that I was privileged to have participated in some of their events. In 2009 I attended the Pow Wow they held. It was beautiful to see a gathering of their people as well as them opening it up to the public. I also supported in a peaceful demonstration in the Yosemite Park valley decrying the abuse of SSM peoples on the part of the federal government. It was a peaceful demonstration involving prayer. In the years since I have also participated in their traditional ceremonies such as a Big Time ceremony, as well as a Bear Ceremony.

I move that this bureaucratic entity re-examine and overturn its findings of the criterion of a distinct community as well as the requirements for documenting community activity. The current proposed findings are a detriment to the self-determination of the SSM people. The bigger questions of documentation seem to be, why has it taken nearly 40 years to come up with these proposed findings? What timeline, if any, is the government held to? Why are the SSM being required to provide documentation running 30 years after their application? Where is the accountability in this matter? And how are the SSM given any relief?

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Quesnot". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark ink on a white background.

Rick Quesnot



RECEIVED  
MAY - 2 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To whom it may concern:

It has come to our attention that the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation have been denied federal recognition as a distinct tribe. As Mariposa residents, we want it to be known that we fully recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct tribal Nation and are in full support of their petition for federal recognition.

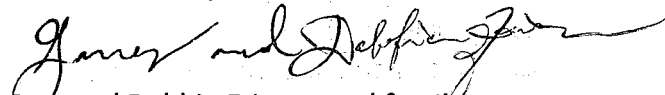
We have been long-time residents of Mariposa (since 2001). Our children have gone to school with Southern Sierra Miwuk friends, learned about their tribal history in the area through volunteer work at the Mariposa History Museum, and attended the local Pow wow hosted by the American Indian Council of Mariposa, where their Southern Sierra Miwuk friends were dancers.

We love living near Yosemite National Park, and yet were dismayed to learn of the history of violence by state-funded militias like the Mariposa Battalion in the 1850s and the non-ratification of sovereign nation-to-nation treaties in the same era. Given the history of California genocide and removal of Indigenous peoples into the late 1800s, and then assimilation policies into the late 1900s, it is a wonder that tribal Nations like the Southern Sierra Miwuk even survive today and have been able to keep their cultural identity alive!

As Mariposa residents, we have been amazed to witness their local efforts to revitalize language, teach their young people, and take care of their elders. We believe that federal recognition would not only benefit the Southern Sierra Miwuk community, but also would benefit their neighbors like us. When Indigenous communities are strengthened and uplifted, the whole community is strengthened. They are our link to an unbroken chain of people who lived on this land we love, and represent a vital history to be protected, shared, and continued for generations to come. We believe we have a lot to learn from their ways of living in greater balance with our local ecosystems and from their language and cultural traditions.

We ask that you please reconsider your refusal to recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct community. We will continue to see them as such.

With all due respect,

  
Gary and Debbie Friesen and family

RECEIVED  
MAY - 2 2019  
BY \_\_\_\_\_

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the Southern Sierra Miwuk (SSM) Nation and their application for federal recognition. I am a pastor and educator who grew up in Mariposa, CA and frequented Yosemite National Park. My family and I recognize the SSM as a distinct tribal community. Their distinct community is well known in our local Mariposa community, and also in Yosemite National Park. I believe that federal recognition offers the SSM and the U.S. government an opportunity for justice after many years of denial of the rights of the SSM.

Recognition will serve not only the SSM but also Yosemite National Park as a whole and our local ecosystems. Federal recognition would allow the land management practices of the SSM to be seen as valuable assets for the survival of intricate Yosemite ecosystems that co-evolved with the ancestors of the SSM over thousands of years. It is unconscionable that the SSM – whose elders were born in Yosemite Valley – are not allowed to even apply for a permit to gather plants and medicines from their traditional homelands, since they are not federally recognized.

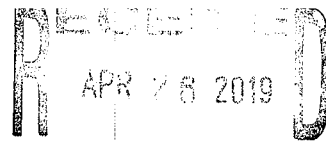
Along with members of my Christian faith tradition in the Mennonite Church, I have been undergoing a process of study and lament over the Doctrine of Discovery, the underlying Western legal framework that justified Indigenous land dispossession, removal and destruction of Indigenous ways of life around the world. I currently teach a course for seminary students following the Potawatomi Trail of Death under the 1830 Indian Removal Act. Students draw connections between the government's forced removal of Indigenous Peoples in the 1800s and the continuation of the Doctrine of Discovery today, shown in the cases that disregard Indigenous land rights and in the ongoing failure to recognize Indigenous nations like the SSM as sovereign nations deserving of respect and resources. The OFA has only acknowledged one California tribe in the last 40 years (the Death Valley Timbisha Shoshone), evidence of either a broken system or one that is functioning extremely well to deny tribal communities their rights.

We can't change history, but we can act for change in the present. I appeal to you to act for justice and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct nation.

With all due respect for the power we have vested in you as citizens,



Katerina Friesen  
Pastor, Adjunct Instructor  
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary



BY: \_\_\_\_\_

April 23, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Vicente Diaz. I am a member of the Hualapai Tribe and descendant of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and Oglala Sioux Tribe. I am writing this letter to express concern of Federal Recognition of Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSM) needs to be federally recognized as an Indian Nation. The SSM people have maintained a presence in Yosemite National Park and surrounding aboriginal territories for time immemorial. My ancestors, the Washoe people, have recognized and traded with the Southern Sierra Miwuk long before the establishment of the United States and the State of California. My people would travel to visit and trade goods, such as pine nuts, acorns, salt, roots, and game for the benefit for our communities. It concerns me when the federal government, and more specifically the National Parks Service and other agencies, seek to strengthen tribal relations but lack knowledge, acknowledgment, and recognition of the SSM people and the land they reside. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement and National Park Service needs to recognize the importance of SSM people petition to maintain their space. If NPS states that their intentions are to improve tribal relations they should first start by advocating for such recognition. To my understanding gathering permits are given to federally recognized tribes. This does not apply to SSM people due to their status as an Indian Nation. The SSM people are not able to access their traditional cultural resources because of the recognition process system and pedigree of Indian status the federal government has placed on Indian people. The OFA should understand that SSM people have been accessing these spaces since their creation and should continue to do so. My people, Hualapai, Washoe, and Oglala Lakota have also experience exclusion, appropriations of lands and desecration of sacred sites from the National Park Service, Nation Forrest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. It troubles me when agencies such as the OFA, NPS, and other agencies manage ancestral territories of Indian tribes and exclude them. I write to you as a citizen with public interest, as a Washoe descendant with relations to the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, and as an Indian tribal member whose wants to bring attention to the importance of this matter.

Sincerely,

Vicente Diaz

AUG 18 2019  
BY: RECEIVED  
AUG 18 2019  
BY:

Candy O'Donel-Browne  
PO Box 576, 628 Rancheria Creek Road  
Midpines, California. 95345

The Honorable Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior, Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California.

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

Less than 170 years ago, Midpines and the surrounding area supported a nation of Miwuk people. They shared adequate resources to live here comfortably for thousands of years.

I've been told that they called the hill I live on Sunny Knoll. From my house, I look up at Labrado Mountain, so named after Maria Labrado, granddaughter of Chief Tenaya of Yosemite Valley. Her family was cast out of Yosemite for the first time in 1851 by Major James Savage. I overlook the Sarah Priest Allotment at the foot of Labrado Mountain, which is administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I pass the Miwuk cemetery whenever I drive to town. For sure, I am reminded every day that I live in Indian territory.

So how did I get here? My own ancestors were European immigrants.

In the 1850's, the native lands of Midpines were suddenly overrun by an influx of forty-niners. (My property abuts a registered gold mine.) The concept of land ownership shifted during the Gold Rush; it was Europeanized. Within a few years, it became illegal for native people to live off land officially taken over by foreign invaders.

Over the years, Miwuk families have had to work out how to survive without much support in an alien world. Broken treaties have created distrust. Territory held by Miwuk tribal members has been confiscated bit by bit. Deprived of their ancestral homeland, some tribal members have been forced to scatter. Race-based hostility and prejudicial injustice have eroded Miwuk self esteem for generations. This has taken an overwhelming emotional toll on a cohesive nation and the individuals within it.

However—despite being starved, murdered, displaced and disregarded, and having no centralized territory to call their own—our local Miwok tribe has continued to maintain a strong identity. They know who they are. And those of us who live on what was once their land acknowledge their traditions and history.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation is eager to win federal recognition, which will provide them with the dignity and status they deserve. As their neighbor, I strongly believe that we, the people who overran their country, owe them at least that much. I feel uncomfortable seeing that a proposed finding against acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation as an Indian tribe is being considered by my government. For the sake of justice, please reconsider before it becomes final.

Respectfully,  
  
Candy O'Donel-Browne

cc: Petitioner #082: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA, P.O. Box 186, Mariposa, CA 95338

Candy O'Donel-Browne  
PO Box 576, 628 Rancheria Creek Road  
Midpines, California. 95345

RECEIVED  
AUG 18 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

August 14, 2019

Bill Leonard, Tribal Chairman  
American Indian Council of Mariposa County  
PO Box 186  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Bill:

It is my understanding that the American Indian Council of Mariposa County has submitted a petition for tribal acknowledgement of to:

The Honorable Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior, Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Enclosed please find a copy of my letter to her office endorsing the request for Petitioner #082: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA, P.O. Box 186, Mariposa, CA 95338.

Never give up!

Sincerely,



Candy O'Donel-Browne

ATTENTION: D/C ROOM  
1849 C STREET, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240