

Dec. 22, 2019

To: Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC  
20240

Dear Department of the Interior office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. You have denied recognition based on the criteria that the Nation does not constitute a "community."

Your list of <sup>reasons</sup> the rationale for this decision - contains items that are prima facie insubstantial, ill-reasoned, and in defiance of common sense, e.g. "lack of evidence" that community members attend each others' birthday parties and baby showers.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner. They are recognized by the communities in their locale, as well as by other local tribes, as a community and a Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted). They host multiple well-attended community events each year. They have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation and as a community.

I have made friends with people from this community and feel lucky to know even the little bit I have learned of their community culture. It defies logic that after 30 years

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of their patently complying with the BIA Federal recognition process, and their meeting 6 of the 7 official criteria for recognition, that at the eleventh hour you could conceive of this flimsy excuse - lack of evidence that community members attend each others' birthday parties and baby showers - to deny the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation Federal Acknowledgment.

I am sure that you understand that many people are concerned with your action, and that having the time of this public comment period to reconsider your position is a welcome opportunity to hit the "reset button." I appreciate the hard work you do on behalf of all Americans, and on behalf of all the Native people whom you serve.

Please overturn the proposed finding and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation as a Federally Recognized Tribe. While I have focused in this letter on the issue of the "baby showers and birthday parties reasoning," the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation has a clear, unambiguous record of self-governance, good faith in dealing with thirty years of requests from the BIA, and a patently clear functioning community. Please, do the right thing, immediately.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Skezas

Amy Skezas

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