

11 September 2020

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

Dear Assistant Secretary Sweeney

We are writing to you today on behalf of the Bahá'í community of Mariposa County in the matter of the Proposed Finding Against Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82), dated November 16, 2018. Given the documentary evidence we have seen, and the comment letters received on this matter, we find the Proposed Finding Against to be a great miscarriage of justice.

Members of our Bahá'í community have had experience with the local Miwuk people going back to the early 1960s, when many of them still lived in the Native American Village in Yosemite Valley, just northwest of Yosemite Lodge, and remember the village's destruction in 1969. Several of us have known and worked with various member of the Tribe in Yosemite, El Portal, and Mariposa, counting them as friends and neighbors, up to the present time. Throughout this period, the Souther Sierra Miwuk have shown integrity as a local community, notwithstanding their harsh and unjust treatment since the 1850s. Since at least 1980 they have been working to pull their dispersed community back from the edge of dissolution, and to inaugurate efforts to regain their people's inherent dignity, restore their traditional religion and lifeways, and to be good citizens and productive members of the United States, Mariposa County, and larger regional community. Many of them are proud veterans of the U.S. military. Federal recognition will open to them many new opportunities and badly needed resources for their continued efforts to rebuild their community.

Our Bahá'í sacred writings call for the unity of all nations and people, recognizing the diversity of race, religion, and cultural ways of the world's various peoples, and that it is only through such recognition and sovereignty of these peoples that the "unity in diversity" needed for global peace and prosperity can come about. Federal recognition as a Native American Tribe will not only help right historic wrongs and long-standing injustice, but will bring us one step closer to this goal of global unity and human prosperity.

We thank you for this opportunity to offer our comments, and pray that you will see the way forward to grant the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation their requested Federal recognition.

Most sincerely,



Phyllis Becker, Chair  
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mariposa County