

Due 3/18

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Assembly California Legislature



NORMA J. TORRES
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-SECOND DISTRICT

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February 26, 2013

To: State Water Resources Control Board
Chairman Charles Hoppin
Vice Chair Frances Spivy-Weber
Board Member Tam Doduc
Board Member Felicia Marcus
Board Member Steven Moore

Re: Morongo Band of Mission Indians

I am writing today to express my concerns regarding the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) pending proceedings involving the Proposed Revocation of License 659 (Application 553) of The Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Millard Canyon in Riverside County. The Proposed Revocation contradicts California's longstanding recognition of the inherent right of Indian Tribes to exercise sovereign authority over their territory and it represents an ill-advised effort by the state to dictate land use policies for Tribal land held in trust by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Indian tribes within the state have long suffered from high rates of unemployment and inadequate educational, housing, elderly care, and health care opportunities, while typically being located on lands that are not conducive to economic development in order to meet those needs. The Morongo Band of Mission Indians has made great strides towards reversing this trend, through increased economic development and they have simultaneously gone to great lengths to protect and enhance natural resources on their reservation.

In this context, the SWRCB's Proposed Revocation infringes upon Morongo's sovereign immunity, it ignores Morongo's long-standing stewardship efforts, and it represents a misguided effort to dictate land use policy for Tribal land held in trust by the BIA. Further, California has long directed State Agencies to demonstrate discretion on matters involving Indian Tribes and stipulated that discretion should be exercised in a way that reflects the consistent State policy. I strongly urge SWRCB to demonstrate discretion consistent with State policy and reconsider the Proposed Revocation.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

NORMA J. TORRES
Assemblymember, 52nd District

Cc: The Honorable Edmund "Jerry" Brown, Governor of California
Mr. Jacob Appelsmith, Office of Governor Edmund "Jerry" Brown

