March 25, 2016

This is a letter of support for the petition of the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, Petitioner #5, to achieve their long sought federal recognition as an Indian tribe.

Las Cruces is a diverse community with a history of friendliness toward newcomers and visitors, and I believe it totally appropriate to honor with respect all who live here now and all who have lived here in the past. Doing so starts with respecting those whose ancestors first walked in this place.

Historically, the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe, Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, Petitioner #5, Las Cruces, New Mexico, was living on land that would become the City of Las Cruces when the Town of Las Cruces was established in 1849, and a significant percentage of tribal members still live within a few blocks of the old Tribal community and cacique’s plaza near downtown Las Cruces.

The Tribe’s current Cacique, Ed Roybal, Sr., was born on that historic property, just a few blocks from my office at City Hall, which originally belonged to his grandfather, Felipe Roybal, the Tribe’s Cacique at the turn of the 20th century.

We in this community honor and value the many contributions of members of the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe and of the rich culture of the Tribe to our community. It was my honor and pleasure to be in charge of our local commemoration of the Centennial of Statehood for New Mexico in January of 2012. I believed then, and continue to believe now, that it was totally appropriate to have the Piro/Manso/Tiwa be the first group in the parade.

Thus, I offer my full support for the petition of the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, Petitioner #5, to achieve their long sought federal recognition and be officially known as what I know the Piro/Manso/Tiwa to be: an extant Indian tribe.

Respectfully,

Gregory Z. Smith
Mayor Pro Tem
Councillor for District 2
The Gateway District
Exemption 6