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To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to support the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Tribe), a sovereign group that has continued a culturally-rooted existence and maintained various community-based relationships in Northern Los Angeles County, their ancestral lands, as they pursue federal acknowledgment.

As the Curator of Archaeology, I first became aware of their community in 1998 while complying with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Members of their community have always been active with cultural protection and they were consulted with in regards to the care of their ancestral remains. I feel it's important to show my support of their community now.

The long-term effects of the enslavement at Mission San Fernando did not weaken San Fernando Indian relations as intended, but instead, inspired their ancestors to form allies within their lineages and among local community members.

To ensure cultural survival through the settler agenda, the Tribe's progenitors retained their heritage in the privacy of their homes. The late Charlie Cooke began preservation efforts through cultural-based projects vital to the conservation of cultural resources. Meanwhile, the late Rudy Ortega Sr. became elected as Tribal President and continued integral government-to-government discourse and relationships that carry through today. The creation of the Tribe's nonprofit, Pukú Cultural Community Services, further involved the local Los Angeles indigenous community and continues to sponsor youth in obtaining higher education without compromising their native identity. Cousins Ortega Sr. and Cooke demonstrated that pre-Mission leadership roles transcended the assimilation pressures of the settler community and evolved to fit the needs of contemporary San Fernando Indians. They sustained traditional values, as well as cultural and physical survival.

The social, political, and community-based involvement of the Indians of San Fernando within and outside of Los Angeles County, which preceded the establishment of Mission San Fernando and continues through their descendants, exemplifies the upholding of their culture and pride. In conclusion, I fully support the Tribe as they seek federal recognition. I hope that the Office of Federal Acknowledgement concludes that this same group be deserving of recognition.

Sincerely,



Wendy Giddens Teeter, Ph.D., RPA
Curator of Archaeology

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