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**DOI/OS/AS-IA/OFA
Washington, DC**

Dear Assistant Secretary Newland,

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for Petition 404 submitted by the Chihene Nde Nation of New Mexico, seeking federal recognition as a tribe. As a descendant of this tribe and an educator at a nonprofit organization specializing in outdoor wildlife education and Native American studies, this issue holds deep personal and professional significance for me.

The Chihene Nde Nation, also known historically as the "Apaches" of 1853 and the "Mimbres Bands of Gila Apache" of 1855, has a rich cultural heritage that predates U.S. occupation, evidenced by treaties with Spain and Mexico. Their historical presence and contributions to the region are irrefutable and merit consideration under the criteria outlined in 25 CFR Part 83.

As an educator, I am committed to fostering historical accuracy and cultural understanding among my students. Although it is disheartening when I inform them of my Native ancestry and explain that my tribe has lost federal recognition in the past, their genuine concern reflects a broader societal need to preserve and honor Native history and culture. I cannot express earnestly enough how much faith I place into the hands of the generations following us to do better with this world than those before us have done, and the basis for this faith reflects in the emotional intellect that lies within the hearts of the wonderful children I interact with on a daily basis. It is our duty to correct the mistakes done to our ancestors, so that our children and children's children are left with a better starting point than we were before them.

Recognizing the Chihene Nde Nation would not only rectify past injustices but also ensure the preservation of their language, identity, and ongoing cultural practices for future generations. I commend the tribal elders for their steadfast efforts in petitioning the federal government for recognition.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I wholly trust that you will give careful consideration to Petition 404 and support the restoration of federal recognition to the Chihene Nde Nation.

Lxeré (Thank you)
Jewel Bonds
Outdoor Educator

