

SALINAN NATION CULTURAL PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION



A 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation C1894237

José Freeman, President: [REDACTED]

Gregg Castro, Secretary/Treasurer: [REDACTED]

Representing Salinan Trowtraahl
(People of the Land)

RECEIVED

March 4, 2025

MAR 12 2025

Department of the Interior
Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgment
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

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

To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Petition Number 406

This is to comment on a petition for federal acknowledgement submitted by the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties (STMSLO). We support Salinan entities who strive to further the interests and well-being of our people. At the same time, it is important to note that petitioner 406 is one of at least three separate tribal entities working for Salinan people. The other two include the Xolon Salinan Tribe and the Salinan *Trowtraahl*, both formerly a part of the Salinan Nation. Today, three tribal entities represent or govern the entirety of the Salinan community, the majority of whom continue to live in our traditional homeland. No one entity has exclusive authority or influence.

Petition 406 presents three family lines, Agata Maria, Encinales Bylon Toro Creek and Pedro Encinales, as their members. To the best of our knowledge, the STMSLO membership does not include all members of the Baylon or the Encinales families. Members of those two families are also affiliated with and members of the Xolon Salinan Tribe. Furthermore, STMSLO's membership as presented in the petition does not include other basic documented Salinan family lines such as the Villavicencio/Villa who are a part of the Salinan *Trowtraahl*.

In 1989, Jennie Mousseaux and Joseph Ballesteros submitted a letter of intent to petition under the name of Salinan Nation (aka Salinan-Chumash Nation). The BIA gave this the number 116. In 1993, Donna Haro submitted a letter of intent

under the name of Salinan Nation; the BIA assigned number 139. In 1997, Donna Haro and some affiliated family members separated out from the Salinan Nation.

Members of the STMSLO Tribe were often recognized in the Jolon area as the “Pierce Bunch from Morro Bay.” In fact, a part of that family is originally from the Jolon area while another part is from Toro Creek. Around 1998, some of those STMSLO family members joined with the Salinans who remained with the Salinan Nation after the Donna Haro departure in a joint effort to collaborate on federal acknowledgement.

In 2001, family members of the original Salinan Nation voted to separate from the Morro Bay group. At that time, the Morro Bay group attached themselves, without our knowledge, to BIA number 139. In doing so, they took on the name Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties around 2001. The Salinan families who remained with the original Salinan Nation retained a non-profit organization incorporated in 1994 as the Salinan Nation Cultural Preservation Association (SNCPA).

Both the SNCPA and Xolon continue to interact regularly with local, state and federal agencies on matters related to the protection of ancestral remains and cultural resources in addition to project planning related to management of our homeland. The SNCPA guides cultural renewal and traditional activities through the Salinan *Trowtraahl*. Finally, Donna Haro submitted another letter of intent in 2001 as the Xolon Salinan Tribe. That was given the number 242.

While tribal members from the SNCPA and the STMSLO participated in shared cultural activities through the years, the leadership of the three tribal entities essentially remained separate, mistrustful and non-communicative. In 2009, the SNCPA sent a letter to the Xolon Salinan Tribe and the Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties inviting reconciliation and mutually beneficial collaboration. Very little came of it.

In 2017, Richard “Dick” Pierce, the father of Penny Hurt of the Xolon Salinan, passed away. He had expressed to his daughter his wishes that Gregg Castro and José Freeman of SNCPA conduct a Going Home Ceremony on his behalf. Ms. Hurt did so, and the ceremony was carried out. This initiated a collaborative effort between the two entities on behalf of all Salinans, an effort that continues to this day.

It is our understanding that the Xolon Salinan intend to submit a petition for federal acknowledgement. We support that endeavor and continue to envision reconciliation and collaboration on behalf of all Salinans living today as well as

those who are yet to come. A recent event highlights that possibility. On February 15, 2025, leadership and members from the three tribal entities appeared together at a Bureau of Land Management event at Piedras Blancas in our homeland. While members of the STMSLO continue to engage in cultural activities with the Xolon and the SNCPA, the STMSLO leadership currently remains resistant to reconciliation. Nevertheless, the February 15th event marks a step in the right direction.

If there are any questions or need for further information, please contact me at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

José Freeman, President
Salinan Nation Cultural Preservation Association

[REDACTED]

Smartsville, CA 95977