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Robert Sean Lyman

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Laguna Hills, CA 92653

[REDACTED]
September 26, 2025

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

Re: Opportunity to Submit Comments – Notice 2025-06-16

Dear Office of Federal Acknowledgment:

In accordance with *25 CFR 83.22(b)(1)(iv)* and the Department's notice dated June 16, 2025, I am submitting the following comments regarding the petitioner's request for federal acknowledgment:

Petition #409 – Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah

I respectfully request that these comments be included in the official record for consideration during the acknowledgment process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please confirm receipt of this submission.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Robert Sean Lyman

Report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**Subject:** Support for Petition #409: Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah**Submitted by:** Robert Sean Lyman**Date:** September 26, 2025

Historical and Tribal Background

Prior to the arrival of Utes from Colorado, northeastern Utah was historically inhabited by Shoshone-speaking groups, including the Northern Shoshone and the Uinta Band, as well as other Indigenous peoples. These communities maintained cultural, spiritual, and territorial connections to the valleys, mountains, and waterways, engaging in hunting, gathering, trade, and complex social networks (Fowler & Call, 2003).

My ancestors were of Shoshone descent from the Uinta Band, forcibly relocated to the Uintah Valley Reservation in 1861 under President Abraham Lincoln's executive order. The reservation was originally established for northern Ute bands, including the Uinta Band, many of whom were Shoshone in ancestry, as part of federal policies consolidating Indigenous peoples into defined territories (Hoxie, 1984). Historical records often misclassify my family as Ute, obscuring the distinct Shoshone heritage of the Uinta Band. In 1886, the Uintah Valley Reservation merged with the Uncompahgre Reservation to form the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, which remains federally recognized today (Adams, 1995).

The Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah (AUC) are direct descendants of the Uinta Valley Shoshone Band. Following termination, the federal government approved a second constitution in 1956, reorganizing the Uinta Band separately from the Confederated Utes of Colorado. The Uinta Band maintains a unique cultural, historical, and genealogical identity (Termination's Legacy, 1992; The Dispossessed, 1988).

Boarding School Attendance

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, my grandmother, Frances Allred (Allen), and her brother, Preston Allen, were sent from the Uintah and Ouray Reservation to the Sherman Institute Indian School in Riverside, California (National Archives Pacific Region Records Center):

- Frances Allred (Allen): 1926–1934
- Preston Allen: 1929–1934

At Sherman Institute, they were separated from family, pressured to abandon cultural traditions, and taught to assimilate into Euro-American society, reflecting federal assimilationist policies of the era (Adams, 1995; Hoxie, 1984).

Termination under the Ute Partition Act

In 1954, Congress enacted the Ute Partition Act (Pub. L. 671, 68 Stat. 868), which terminated federal recognition of certain Utes classified as “mixed-blood.” Among those affected were Frances Allred (Allen), Preston Allen, and their mother, Clara Van Rochel, who were removed from the tribal rolls and assigned numbers on the Final Roll of Mixed-Blood Utes (1956):

- Preston Allen: #1
- Frances Allred (Allen): #2
- Clara Van Rochel: #408

The designation of “mixed-blood” was a federal classification based primarily on blood quantum—a system used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to divide the Ute Tribe into “full-blood” and “mixed-blood” rolls. This distinction did not reflect traditional Ute identity but instead imposed racialized criteria that directly shaped access to rights, resources, and recognition. Those placed on the mixed-blood roll lost tribal membership, access to tribal land, and federal trust protections, even though many, like the Allen and Van Rochel family, had lifelong residence on the reservation and strong cultural and kinship ties.

Termination under the Act revoked tribal enrollment, land rights, and formal recognition, producing long-lasting impacts on identity and community belonging. These issues were later addressed in *Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah v. United States*, 406 F.2d 1273 (10th Cir. 1972), which recognized the complex legal standing of terminated members.

To preserve a measure of community and legal recognition, Article IV of the 1956 Constitution of the Affiliated Ute Citizens (AUC) allowed terminated members and their descendants to become eligible for membership, maintaining cultural connections and certain legal protections.

Affiliated Ute Citizens of Utah and Preston Allen’s Leadership

Following termination, mixed-blood Utes organized as the Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah (AUC), adopting a constitution and bylaws approved by the federal government (*The Dispossessed*, 1988; *Termination’s Legacy*, 1992).

Preston Allen, a World War II Army veteran and Ute rancher, played a central role in advocating for mixed-blood members. In 1956, he was denied registration to vote in Duchesne County due to a state law restricting Native Americans on reservations from voting (Allen v. Merrell, 1956). After challenging the law, the Utah Supreme Court ruled against him, but subsequent legislative action in 1957 extended voting rights to Native Americans on reservations (Rachel's SLC History, 2022; The Salt Lake Tribune, 2025).

Through his leadership in the AUC, Allen ensured that terminated families retained a recognized legal and community structure. The 1956 Constitution reflects these goals:

Preamble:

"We, the members of the Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah, in order to promote our common welfare and to secure for ourselves and our posterity the rights and privileges guaranteed to us as citizens of the United States, do hereby adopt this Constitution and Bylaws."

Article II – Purpose:

"The purpose of this organization shall be to represent the interests of the members in all matters pertaining to property, rights, claims, and privileges which are to be managed or protected under the provisions of the Ute Partition Act."

Allen's efforts preserved community cohesion, legal standing, and political empowerment for terminated families while advancing voting rights for Native Americans (The Dispossessed, 1988; Termination's Legacy, 1992).

Conclusion

Federal termination policies caused lasting harm to Native families, including the loss of identity, land, and recognition. These policies disrupted cultural continuity and created artificial classifications that divided communities along "full-blood" and "mixed-blood" lines, despite shared ancestry and traditions. My family's experience reflects these harms directly—through forced relocation, boarding school assimilation, termination under the Ute Partition Act, and disenfranchisement in the fight for voting rights.

Preston Allen's service to his country as a World War II veteran, coupled with his pivotal role in advocating for voting rights for Native Americans and his leadership in the formation of the Affiliated Ute Citizens, underscores the deep injustice of termination. Despite being stripped of federal recognition, terminated families refused to disappear. Through the AUC, they created a federally approved framework for governance, membership, and legal standing. This demonstrates both resilience and continuity of the Uinta Band and its descendants as a distinct tribal community.

Support for Petition #409 is rooted in this history. Federal acknowledgment of the Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah would:

1. Correct historical misclassification – recognizing that the AUC are descendants of the Uinta Band, whose distinct Shoshone identity was obscured by being recorded as “Ute.”
2. Redress the harms of termination – restoring recognition to a community that has maintained continuity of governance, membership, and cultural identity despite federal policies of erasure.
3. Affirm sovereignty and self-determination – enabling the AUC to exercise the same rights as other federally recognized tribes, including protection of lands, culture, and community welfare.
4. Honor service and sacrifice – acknowledging leaders like Preston Allen who defended both their country and their people’s rights in the face of systemic injustice.

For these reasons, this report is submitted in full support of Petition #409: *Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah, UT*, which seeks federal acknowledgment of the Affiliated Ute Citizens of Utah (Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Federal Acknowledgment, Petition #409; <https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ofa/409-afutci-ut>).

References

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Respectfully,

[Redacted]

Robert Sean Lyman
Uinta Valley Shoshone Tribe, Roll No. [Redacted]
a.k.a. Affiliated Ute Citizens of the State of Utah

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Uinta Valley Shoshone Tribe, Roll No. [Redacted]

//SIGNED//
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U.S. Army

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