



## Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria



December 13, 2022

Elishia Hayes  
County Administrative Officer  
County of Humboldt  
825 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

***Re: Request for Government to Government Consultation regarding Actions and Comments of Supervisor Steve Madrone***

Dear Ms. Hayes:

On behalf of the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Council, please accept our formal request for Government to Government Consultation regarding inappropriate and culturally insensitive remarks made by Supervisor Madrone during a Project Development Team Meeting for the Trinidad Freeway Access Project.

On March 29, 2022, Supervisor Madrone attended a Project Development Team Meeting with Caltrans staff, the Tribe, and other stakeholders to discuss the proposed highway interchange to provide freeway access from Highway 101 to the Trinidad Rancheria. **Supervisor Madrone asserted that our Tribe has no ancestral territory because Rancherias do not have the same rights as “real tribes” and that Rancherias were established for landless homeless Indians who did not have rights to ancestral territory. He said, “just ask the Yurok Tribe”.** Supervisor Madrone’s theory that the Tribe is not a “real tribe” and does not have any ancestral territory is without any basis in historical fact and has been expressly rejected by Congress and the courts.

The Tribe submitted a letter to the Board of Supervisors dated, June 7, 2022 that outlined Supervisor Madrone’s inappropriate comments and discrimination towards Trinidad Rancheria (attached). In that letter, the Tribe requested that the Board of Supervisors take immediate and affirmative action to recognize and affirm the equal rights and status of all federally recognized Indian tribes. The Tribe is concerned that the Board of Supervisors has not responded to our letter or addressed this issue at a Board level. We feel that the Rancheria, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Staff as well as the entire Tribal Council are owed a formal apology regarding this matter and that formal steps must be taken to remedy this situation.



[www.trinidadrancheria.com](http://www.trinidadrancheria.com)

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**In summary, the Trinidad Rancheria formally requests:**

- 1) Formal Government to Government Consultation.
- 2) Affirmation and acknowledgement from the Board of Supervisors that all federally recognized Indian Tribes, including Trinidad Rancheria, possess equal rights and status under federal and state law,
- 3) Initiation of an investigation into the comments made by Supervisor Madrone discriminating towards the Trinidad Rancheria. His remarks regarding Trinidad Rancheria are detrimental to all Rancherias in California and will face tremendous opposition state wide from Rancheria Tribes, and
- 4) Board of Supervisors appointment of a new representative to the Trinidad Rancheria Project Development Team (PDT) who will represent the County with an objective and open mind and not look for ways to derail our project. To our knowledge, Supervisor Madrone has been acting unilaterally, and when asked if he is speaking on behalf of the entire Board, he has indicated that he is not, but speaking on behalf of his constituents.

As mentioned in our email dated December 1, 2022 (attached), the Board sent a letter pledging full support of our Tiger Grant Application for Highway 101 Design and Engineering, on April 23, 2014, and has not taken a negative position on this project.

The Tribe appreciates your consideration of this urgent matter and we look forward to working with you. Please do not hesitate to contact Trinidad Rancheria Chief Executive Officer, Jacque Hostler-Carmesin at (707) 677-0211 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Garth Sundberg  
Tribal Chairman  
Trinidad Rancheria