



CALIFORNIA TRIBAL
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

January 27, 2005

Senator Bob Margett
State Capitol
Sacramento, Ca 95814

Dear Senator Margett:

I am writing on behalf of the tribes that constitute the California Tribal Business Alliance to let you know how disturbed we were about your remarks to Margie Mejia, Chairwoman of the Lytton Band of Pomo Indians, at the Senate Governmental Organization Committee hearing on the Lytton Compact. We had hoped that after the hearing you might have acknowledged the insensitivity of your comments.

Like other California Indians, the Pomo Indians received horrendous treatment from early settlers and the State of California. They were devastated by cholera and smallpox epidemics. Thousands were slaughtered and enslaved – including women and children – by both Mexican and American settlers. Those remaining were driven off their historic tribal lands in the 19th century. Since then, many descendants of the surviving Pomos have lived in grinding poverty, without access to healthcare, education or gainful employment.

Your comment that tribal “gene pool(s) ... are probably dissipated by now” reflects disturbing lack of knowledge of our tribes’ heritage and of Indian history in general. To have made these comments in your official capacity as a California State Senator at a public hearing of a Senate committee on which you serve was a violation of protocol and common decency.

As Chairwoman Mejia pointed out at the hearing, the criteria for membership in the Lytton Band were determined by a federal district court following a judgment overturning the tribe’s illegal termination. Membership is restricted to direct lineal descendants from the Indians identified by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs as living on the tribal land at the time the tribe was terminated.



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While the Lytton Band is not a member of our organization, your comments are distressing to us as California Indian people. We believe you owe Chairwoman Mejia, the Lytton Band of Pomo Indians, the California Indian community, and all Californians an acknowledgement that barriers to positive relationships between the State and tribal governments are only lowered through respect and basic courtesy, no matter your position on the underlying issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Lorenzo', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

PAULA LORENZO, Chair
California Tribal Business Alliance

cc: Chairwoman Margie Mejia
Senator Dean Florez
Senate President pro Tem Don Perata
Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez
Senate Republican Leader Dick Ackerman
Assembly Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy