



June 11, 2024

Tribal Council

Anthony Roberts
Chairman

Yaminah Durham
Secretary

Leland Kinter
Treasurer

Yvonne Perkins
Member

Seth Lowell
Member

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Proceedings on Remand in *Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians v. United States Department of the Interior*

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We write on behalf of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation to follow up on my November 28, 2023, and March 19, 2024, letters requesting your assistance in establishing a fair and transparent process for further proceedings in the above-referenced matter.

We understand the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians may be seeking a restored lands determination for property in the Bay Area city of Vallejo – more than 90 miles from Scotts Valley’s rural homeland northwest of Clear Lake, but squarely within the ancestral lands of our Patwin people. The California Native American Heritage Commission has designated Yocha Dehe as the most likely descendant of Native American remains found in Vallejo and surrounding areas of Solano County (itself named for a Patwin leader). Yocha Dehe, along with a sister Patwin tribe, holds a cultural easement protecting tribal cultural resources in Vallejo parks and recognizing the area as Patwin ancestral lands. And Scotts Valley’s proposed development site contains documented cultural resources associated with our Patwin people.

To date, there has been no response to either letter. We understand other federally recognized tribes made similar requests and were likewise ignored.

We understand from one of our elected representatives that in late March the Bureau of Indian Affairs instead issued – without notice to us or any other interested tribe – a memorandum from the office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs instructing the Bureau of Indian Affairs Pacific Regional Office to proceed with Scotts Valley’s application.

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

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Seeking clarity, we filed Freedom of Information Act requests with several Departmental offices (including yours) to obtain a copy of the memorandum and any application materials Scotts Valley may have submitted. To date, the only response we have received *claims that no memorandum exists*.

In short, Yocha Dehe has been shut out of a process that directly and fundamentally affects our interests by the very federal agency charged with ensuring our position and views are fully considered. Interior has refused to address – or even to acknowledge – our reasonable requests to set a fair, transparent process. The Department has not provided any documents responsive to our Freedom of Information Act requests. There is no way for us to know whether any decision-making process is under way, and no available information about Scotts Valley’s application that would allow us to meaningfully participate if such a process were, in fact, ongoing.

You have often called on Bureaus and Offices within the Department of the Interior to deal honestly and fairly with federally recognized tribal governments and to ensure they are protected in their ancestral homelands. The officials handling this matter have fallen woefully – indeed, *shamefully* – short of those standards. But there may yet be time to make things right. Please direct the Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs to immediately establish a fair, transparent, and fact-based process in which all tribes can meaningfully participate on an equal footing.

Wile bo,

 _____ Anthony Roberts Tribal Chairman	 _____ Mia Durham Tribal Secretary	 _____ Leland Kinter Tribal Treasurer
 _____ Yvonne Perkins Member-at-Large	 _____ Seth Lowell Member-at-Large	

cc: Hon. Alex Padilla, United States Senator
Hon. Mike Thompson, United States Representative
Laura Daniel-Davis, Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior
Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior
Robert Anderson, Solicitor, Department of the Interior
Wizipan Garriott, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior