On June 18, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-15-19, which:

- Formally apologizes for atrocities committed by the State of California against California Native Americans in the early days of statehood;
- Reaffirms and incorporates by reference the principles of government-to-government consultation required by Executive Order B-10-11; and
- Requires the Governor’s Tribal Advisor to establish and convene a “Truth and Healing Council,” which will be responsible for examining and producing a written report of the historical relationship between California Native Americans and the State from the Native perspective.

The Council must be composed of California tribal representatives and/or delegates and must produce its final report on or before January 1, 2025.

The Council will be the first entity of its kind tasked with such an expansive and broad-based undertaking; thus, tribal input is critical to ensure that California tribal governments and broader California Native American population drive the creation and work of the Council.

Throughout 2021, the Council tasked the Office of the Tribal Advisor with conducting a “listening season” in order to receive community feedback and input on: (i) the overall scope of the Council; (ii) creating a framework for the Council to begin examining the historical relationship between California Native Americans and the State; and (iii) establishing the issue areas to be examined by the Council.

The comments, recommendations and general feedback included in this report have informed the development of and scope for the Council.

More information on the Council is available at tribalaffairs.ca.gov/cthc. To follow the Council and its work, please subscribe at cthcupdates.wordpress.com.
Northern Region Listening Session

March 15, 2021

Council Members in attendance: Frankie Myers and Angela Elliott Santos

Recordings available here and here.

Summary of Comments

- Participant shared an educational resource: Save California Salmon – free curriculum “advocacy and water protection in native California” for school – it is free and adaptable. Californiasalmon.org.

- The Council should focus on language revitalization.

- Happy that non-federally recognized tribes have a voice in this space.

- A blog style website with Council updates would help keep the community engaged and informed.

- Participant shared a family story about their family home being dispossessed through the legal system by ranchers and how their family is currently working with the State Park to try to fix this injustice.

- When the Council is able to host listening sessions in person, it should look into holding them in areas where the atrocities and hurt took place. This could provide an opportunity to heal the community and the land.

- In Redding, the Tribe commemorates the date that the unratified Treaty was signed by reading the Treaty on one side of a bridge and then crossing it which is where the proposed reservation would have been. There is also an Adobe Historical marker near where the Treaty was signed in Anderson. Having these conversations near sites like these may restore some balance. However, this may also be traumatic as well.

- Native Wellness Institute has facilitated hard conversations in the past between non-native and native people.
Central Region Listening Session

March 16, 2021

Council Members in attendance: Kouslaa Kessler-Mata, Kenneth Kahn, and Caleen Sisk

Recording available here.

Summary of Comments

- Listening session dates need to be advertised and announced earlier to tribes and community members.
- The Council could increase outreach to teachers by looping in the California Teachers Association American Indian Caucus.
- A storing house of California Native American teaching information would be helpful if it was developed with input from tribes and field tested.
- Broadband equity has an impact on everything, especially education disparities.
- Giving California Indian students the opportunity to choose the school they attend regardless of district boundaries could help correct past educational wrongs.
- Reparations could come in the form of financial assistance for non-federally recognized tribes going through the federal acknowledgment process. Oftentimes, non-federally recognized tribes partner with gaming facilities to cover the cost of recognition, but then experience opposition from other tribes. The Council should look at existing mechanisms and policies aimed at helping tribes go through the acknowledgment process and then come up with reparative mechanisms to right this wrong.
- Council should look at the intersectionality of art and restorative justice. Visual representation could be a strong way to capture non-native allies in this work. Art heals trauma and can be used as a tool for cultural wellness.
- California highways and parks should contain California Native American art, similar to New Mexico.
- California law allows non-federally recognized tribes to participate in discretionary ICWA proceedings, but there must be significant support and findings for these tribes because most do not have robust ICWA departments or the capacity to appear in court. Non-federal recognition directly impacts the tribe’s ability to protect its children.
- Higher education institutions, including the UC system, should be hiring California Native professors.
Real change occurs at the top, for example, how can this effort empower the Judicial Council to do its work when those pushing the issues do not have the power to implement systemic change.
March 17, 2021

Council Members in attendance: Anthony Burris

Recording available here.

Summary of Comments

- Elders have expressed that they are excited about the California Truth and Healing Council and shocked that the state is addressing the issues.
- Disenrollment creates spiritual, cultural, and economic hardships. An individual shared a personal story of scholarship loss due to disenrollment which subsequently led to dropping out of higher education.
- There should be more scholarship opportunities for those that belong to a non-federally recognized tribe and those that have been disenrolled from tribes.
- Participant from a non-federally recognized tribe shared a story regarding identity and hesitancy of elders to share the knowledge due to the associated trauma of non-federal recognition.
- The Indigenous Wellness Circle in Southern California could be a resource for a wellness practitioner.
- The relationship between the State, local jurisdictions and tribes is strained in certain counties and needs improvement.
- The Council should remember those elders that held on to traditions when it was illegal and risked their lives to do so.
- The State places barriers on tribal development and sovereignty, which is in part because of PL-280.
- There should be historic markers in the state related to California tribes because California history is California Indian history.
- The State Park tells the wrong narrative about certain tribes and needs to do better at consulting with local tribes.
- The community would like a formal process in place that can be relied on to interact with the council. There is a concern about the way records will be collected, archived, and accessed.
Eastern Region Listening Session

March 18, 2021


Recording available here.

Summary of Comments

- A participant noted frustration with the California Native American Heritage Center and the need to loop in those community members and artists that participated in planning sessions over the last decade.
- The Council should examine tribal water rights.
- The Council should examine hunting and fishing rights for tribes.
- The Council should look at ways to support disenrolled elders that are nearing the end of their lives and find ways to support these elders.
- The UC system should be examined because of their status as a land grant university. The Council should look into creating a meaningful relationship with the UC system through examining the past.
- CalNAGPRA needs to be supported more.
- Participant noted that disenrollment has impacted native students scholarship eligibility.
- The Council should examine the 18 unratified treaties.
- The Council should examine the California Indians Land Claims and specifically the injustice of Native American’s that were subject to that yet are not part of a federally recognized tribe in present time.