



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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September 17, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 1187 – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of Mendocino, we write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 1187, the Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act. Modeled after federal Indian Housing programs and State programs like the Joe Serna, Jr. Farmworker Housing Grant Program, the Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act would create a first-ever Tribal Housing Grant Program. It will be administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development and will provide equitable access to financing so Tribes can provide decent, affordable, and sustainable homes for low- and moderate-income tribal members and non-Native employees of tribal governments in a manner that respects Tribal sovereignty and cultural heritage.

Since becoming a state in 1850, California has had a long history of State-sponsored genocide, land theft, displacement, and marginalization of its Native population. This history is a direct cause of the poor living conditions and underdevelopment faced by most Tribal communities to this day. Tribes have the highest rates of poverty, substandard and overcrowded homes, homelessness, and failing or nonexistent infrastructure of any population in the state.

According to the Corporation for Supportive Housing's California Homeless Housing Needs Assessment, homelessness among Indigenous people is up to double that of the general population. For example, Mendocino County's 2024 point-in-time count found 38% of unsheltered people were Indigenous. Census data also show that Tribes are disproportionately represented among the state's unhoused.

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Existing State housing and community development programs, despite recent Tribal set-asides, have failed to address these needs. Most Tribes do not apply because applications are onerous, and they cannot dedicate the upfront staff and funds required. Only about 13 of the 110 federally recognized

Tribes in California have succeeded, mostly larger Tribes with funds for full-time housing staff and expensive consultants. Existing programs also conflict with Tribal sovereignty, laws, and culture, which necessitates requests for time-consuming waivers from program rules. In other words, these programs simply don't fit Tribal needs and conditions.

The Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act is designed by Tribes for Tribes. In other words, it does not try to impose a non-Native model of housing and community development on Indian lands. This isn't another state program; it's a step towards restorative justice for Tribal Californians, rectifying historic displacement from ancestral lands, and providing Tribes with a flexible and comprehensive resource to meet their housing and community needs.

California's Tribal communities have been left out of the conversation around housing for too long and SB 1187 is a great start towards helping Tribes reach parity when it comes to these issues. Thank you for your leadership on these critical housing, homelessness and Tribal issues and for all these reasons, we respectfully ask that you approve the bill.

Sincerely,



Maureen Mulheren, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Jim Wood, Member of the California State Assembly
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Member of the California State Assembly
Iliana Chevez, CCRH Tribal Technical Assistance Programs Manager
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange