

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS
AND SHEILA KUEHL

October 5, 2021

**Indigenous Peoples Day 2021 – Development of Land Acknowledgement and
Land Access Policies**

On October 3, 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) passed a motion authored by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis directing County Counsel to “create an ordinance to remove all references to Columbus Day as an official County holiday and recognize Indigenous Peoples Day instead.” On May 1, 2018, the Board formally adopted the ordinance. Indigenous Peoples Day is now an official County holiday that is observed on the second Monday of October. Indigenous Peoples Day recognizes and celebrates the rich history and significant contributions made to our communities by diverse Indigenous populations.

Native Americans are descendants of the Indigenous people who were the original inhabitants of this continent. California is home to over 200 Native Nations. The County of Los Angeles (County) is home to multiple tribes who have never been federally recognized. As a result, the local tribes of what is now known as Los Angeles County are without land or legal protections.

A lack of federal recognition, exacerbated by various County policies and

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procedures, has resulted in numerous land access issues for local tribal people, including an inability to use lands for cultural and ceremonial purposes such as gathering plant material and visiting sacred or culturally significant sites. For Native people control over and access to land is directly linked to the free exercise of culture and religion because many Native cultural and religious practices are tied to specific landscapes. Ancestral homelands and particular locations may be inextricably linked to a Tribe's identity, and cultural and religious practices may be effectively prohibited without meaningful access to certain sites.

Ongoing issues related to accessing County-owned and other public lands for Native cultural practices were highlighted by stakeholders during a convening of tribal and Native American communities held in May 2019 in support of the development of the Our County Sustainability Plan (Plan), which was adopted by the Board in August 2019. Based on the stakeholder feedback, the Plan includes a short-term action, Action 78, which directs the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to "collaborate with local tribes to identify and address barriers to observance of traditional practices such as harvesting and gathering, particularly on County-owned land."

At the time of adoption of the Plan, the Board directed the Chief Sustainability Office to select priority actions from the Plan for implementation on an annual basis. Last year, I introduced a motion to ask for a report back that detailed the barriers faced by indigenous people and convened meetings of tribal leaders to produce solutions to address those barriers.

In recent years, the County has been active in both uplifting the true histories of what is now known as Los Angeles County and prioritizing equity for communities

countywide. The inequitable access to County-owned lands for Native people negatively impacts their physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and cultural health. Tribal engagement on these issues at the local level is critical to the development and maintenance of equitable and culturally just local land use policies and procedures that improve access to parks, beaches, recreational waters, public lands, and public spaces for Native American people to observe traditional practices.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Promote Indigenous Peoples Day 2021 by encouraging all County Departments and County residents to participate in Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and activities taking place on and around October 11, 2021.
2. Instruct the Departments of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) - Native American Indian Commission (NAIC) and Arts and Culture to fund \$75,000 each for a total of \$150,000 to:
 - a. Hire a consultant to facilitate the development of Land Acknowledgement and Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits for Los Angeles County, in accordance with the Countywide Cultural Policy, and gather input to inform ways in which the County has harmed local tribal nations.
 - b. Fund honorariums to pay tribal leaders or their designees for their time and knowledge.
3. Authorize Arts and Culture, in coordination with WDACS and NAIC, to enter into agreements with one or more consultants, as needed, to carry out Directive 2.

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