



The Office of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council

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March 18, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Subj: Formal request to #LandBack the Presidio of San Francisco

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the **Muwekma Ohlone Tribe**, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your recent proposal to dissolve the **Presidio Trust**. Of course, this is an opportunity for your administration to make the federal government smaller, less expensive, more focused, and less prone to waste, fraud, and abuse. For too many decades, the Presidio Trust has been the political patronage playground of former Senator **Diane Feinstein** and Speaker Emerita **Nancy Pelosi** – who for decades have acted against the interests of our tribe.

The lucrative base of patronage has been influenced by Sen. Feinstein and Rep. Pelosi, who both live within blocks of this section of San Francisco. Both elected officials have been staunchly opposed to our Tribe's 45-year long struggle to affirm its federal status. When the Tribe submitted a Right of First Refusal to the federal government during the decommissioning of the military installation in 1992, both women were opposed.

"I don't want an Indian Tribe in my City," Feinstein told the former Tribal Chairwoman at the time, a statement that still offends the Tribe today. Feinstein, Pelosi, and Rep. **Zoe Lofgren**, are widely seen as the Tribe's most ardent opponents.

But we see this as much more than just one opportunity to make the federal government more efficient. Our People see this an enormous and historic opportunity to acknowledge injustices faced by California Indians, and would constitute the boldest **#LandBack** act of rematriation in American history.

Our People have never ceded, surrendered, or in any way abrogated aboriginal title to the Presidio, which the Spanish began occupying without a deed or transfer of title. The rightful return of the Presidio of San Francisco to its aboriginal title holders would constitute an extraordinary act of reconciliation. During the Spanish conquest, the fortress was used as a prison where were captured before being enslaved at three Bay Area missions: Mission Dolores (San Francisco), Mission Santa Clara, and Mission San Jose.

We have long maintained a deep cultural and spiritual connection to the Presidio lands, which have been integral to our identity and heritage for countless generations. We believe that the return of our ancestral lands is not only a matter of justice but also holds substantial fiscal and political implications that can benefit the tribe, local communities, and the federal government:

- 1. Fiscal Benefits.** Transferring the management of the Presidio back to the Tribe would enable a hyper-local approach to the management of a treasured national parkscape – and would do so in a way that relieves federal, state, and local taxpayers from the burden of its operating costs. Our Tribe has extensive traditional ecological knowledge and will deliver superior and more sustainable land management practices, at a far lower cost than the federal agency currently expends.

2. **Economic Benefits.** The Tribe is uniquely positioned to elevate the Presidio as a tourist destination. No other operator can bring into the visitor experience as authentic, deep, or wide a range of cultural programming that illuminates the anthropological history of the land. Our Tribe can bolster the local economy by wildly enhancing the visitor experience while elevating the Presidio as California's premier destination for spiritual catharsis and personal renewal.
3. **Political Benefits.** Returning the Presidio to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe would symbolize a commitment to reconciliation and respect for Indigenous sovereignty. It would make a historic and proud moment for the United States, and would earn the Administration enormous praise from Indian Country. At the local level, it would dismantle a federally funded political machine that is controlled by an ultra-elitist cabal of politicians.
4. **Cultural Benefits.** Returning the Presidio to our Tribe would catalyze a golden age for our People – and would manifest a less elitist reality for San Francisco and coastal California.

While you seek to repeal the **Presidio Trust Act of 1996**, we would like to bring to your attention an additional legal pathway that can expedite that process and compliment this cost-cutting effort. Section 7 of the **Indian Reorganization Act of 1934** [25 U.S.C. 5110] gives the Secretary of the Interior the power to “proclaim new reservations”.

We formally and respectfully request that your Administration exercises this awesome power in defense of our People. This action would rectify historical wrongs and empower our community to thrive while contributing positively to the cultural, ecological, fiscal, economic, and spiritual well-being of the broader San Francisco Bay Area.

Enclosed, you will find a formal proposal that outlines our request in greater detail.

Please do accept this correspondence as a formal request for tribal consultation pursuant to Executive Order 13175, "*Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*," which requires federal agencies to consult with Indian tribes when developing policies that have substantial direct effects on us.

We pray for the possibility of working together to realize a just resolution for our Tribe and the legacy of the land we hold sacred. We hope so much to meet with you in Washington, DC to discuss; and we'd be enormously appreciative of whatever time you can spare.

My warmest regards,



Charlene Nijmeh
Chairwoman

CC: Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs