



GABRIELEÑO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS - KIZH NATION

Historically known as The San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
recognized by the State of California as the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles basin

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Shannon Ryan
Senior City Planner
L.A City Planning
221 N. Figueroa St., Room 1350
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: First Peoples of Los Angeles Historic Context- Ancestral Narrative of the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians Kizh (Quiichi) Nation

Dear City of Los Angeles,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Citywide Historic Context Statement regarding the First Peoples of Los Angeles. While Los Angeles is now home to Native Americans from many tribes across the state, country, and broader continent, it is essential to clarify and emphasize the distinction between current residence and ancestral origin in the context of this historic narrative.

Acknowledgment of the Original Indigenous Lineal Ancestors

The Kizh Nation represents the original indigenous lineal ancestors of the Los Angeles Basin, encompassing the lands now known as Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, as well as the Channel Islands. Known traditionally as the Quiichi, the Kizh Nation is the only Kizh tribal government in all of California representing the direct descendants of the First Peoples of this region.

The Kizh Nation was also the original tribal government recognized by the State of California through State Proclamation AJR96 in 1994, under the name "Gabrieleño Tribal Council." This historical acknowledgment further solidifies our role and recognition as the rightful stewards of this region.

The Kizh Nation is deeply rooted in the Los Angeles Basin without interruption, maintaining our presence and cultural heritage in the region since time immemorial.

Our tribe and its members descend from the direct, original Indigenous lineal ancestors, as recognized through historical mission records to this day. We are deeply woven into the foundation of California's history, particularly within the Los Angeles Basin. Our lineage and contributions have played a crucial role in shaping the cultural, social, and historical evolution of this region, making our story an integral part of California's origins and development. While we are prepared to provide evidence supporting our claims, we remain steadfast in protecting the identities of those involved, as past exploitations have resulted in the theft and misrepresentation of our tribe's heritage and identity. This includes prominent tribal leaders and individuals such as:

Nicolas Joseph (1785): Leader of his people and leader of the rebellion against the Spanish at Mission San Gabriel.

Toypurina (1785): Renowned leader and cultural symbol of resistance.

Our tribe and members are also lineal descendants of the Indigenous people connected to the La Misión Vieja (Village of Siba, 1771), the San Gabriel Mission Archangel (Toviscanga, 1773) and are direct lineal descendants of

Andrew Salas, Chairman
Albert Perez, treasurer I

Nadine Salas, Vice-Chairman
Martha Gonzalez Lemos, treasurer II

Dr. Christina Swindall Martinez, secretary
Richard Gradias, Chairman of the council of Elders

PO Box 393 Covina, CA 91723

www.gabrielenoindians.org

admin@gabrielenoindians.org

the original inhabitants of the Los Angeles area, formally known as (Yaangna). The village of Yaangna, a thriving village at the time of European contact, is widely recognized as the birthplace of the City of Los Angeles.

Let us also not forget the renowned leadership of today, exemplified by the late Tomayaar Ernie P. Salas Teutimez (2021) and his son, Tomayaar Andrew Salas, who continue to uphold the cultural and historical legacy of the Kizh Nation.

Historical Significance and Ancestral Territory

Our ancestral lands extend across a significant portion of Southern California and include the following areas:

The Los Angeles Basin

The Channel Islands: Including San Nicolas, San Clemente, and Santa Catalina Islands

The Santa Monica Mountains, Topanga, and Santa Susana Mountains

Eastward to the lower elevations of the San Gabriel Mountains and Yucaipa

This extensive ancestral territory reflects the Kizh Nation's historical presence and stewardship of the land. The Kizh Nation is the only tribal nation ancestrally tied to these lands, and this fact is well-documented by our Nation, as well as by anthropologists, historians, the State of California, the United States Government, and including the Smithsonian Institution.

The historical and cultural significance of our ancestral territory is not only validated through indigenous oral history but also supported by substantial records and research. This recognition underscores our enduring connection to these lands, our role as their original caretakers, and the importance of ensuring the protection of our cultural resources. Any efforts to misrepresent this heritage or include other groups as ancestral stewards contradict this historical evidence and jeopardize the accurate preservation of our shared history.

The Kizh Nation became known as Gabrieleño after the establishment of the San Gabriel Mission in 1771, where Spanish missionaries assigned the name to the indigenous people of the surrounding area. While the name "Gabrieleño" is widely recognized, it reflects an external imposition rather than our original identity. Our true name, Kizh (Quiichi), reflects our deep connection to our land and culture long before European contact.

Documented Evidence of the Kizh Nation

This fact has been further supported through:

1. Anthropological and Historical Records:

The Kizh Nation is extensively documented as the First Peoples of Los Angeles, with records tracing back to the establishment of the San Gabriel Mission. Spanish mission records, early settler accounts, and archaeological findings affirm that the Kizh Nation were the original inhabitants and stewards of the Los Angeles Basin and surrounding regions.

2. Cultural Continuity:

The Kizh Nation has retained a distinct cultural identity, language, and history that directly connects us to the land now known as Los Angeles. Our oral histories, traditions, and practices have been passed down through generations, preserving our unique perspective as the original stewards of this region. Nearby sister tribes also recognized the Kizh Nation as the original lineal ancestral descendants of this region, further affirming our role as the First Peoples of this land. This acknowledgment is documented and affirms both our ancestral heritage and our enduring connection to this territory.

3. Legal and Academic Recognition:

The Kizh Nation is consistently recognized in legal frameworks such as CEQA (California Environmental

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Quality Act) and AB 52 as the ancestral tribal nation of the Los Angeles Basin. Academic and municipal studies have further affirmed our historical and cultural connection to these lands.

Distinction Between Current Tribes and Ancestral Tribes

While many Native Americans from various tribes now call Southern California home, their presence reflects migration, displacement, and intertribal movement over time. This context does not equate to ancestral ties to the region. The migration of Spaniards and Mexican Indians into California, including from Baja California, is well-documented. While some individuals served on ranchos, serving on a rancho does not mean they were originally from the area of the Gabrielinos. Migration means moving from one place to another, and this distinction is critical when determining ancestral ties.

In addition, today's land acknowledgments are increasingly being misused to distort and erase the true history of the original ancestral tribes of this region. These acknowledgments, while seemingly progressive, are often used to falsely attribute ancestral ties to groups that lack direct lineage to the area. This misuse undermines the rights and recognition of true Indigenous lineal descendants, including the Kizh Nation with an unbroken ancestral lineage to their traditional lands.

Such practices amount to a form of modern colonization, cultural genocide, and historical erasure. By prioritizing inaccurate narratives over documented histories, these distortions perpetuate atrocities against the true stewards of the land, disregarding their cultural and spiritual connection to the region.

The unique history, perspective, and heritage of the Kizh Nation as the original indigenous lineal ancestors must remain the focal point of any narrative about the First Peoples of Southern California.

The City's efforts to uplift the voices of First Peoples must center on those with lineal ancestral connections to this land. Recognizing this distinction ensures the integrity and accuracy of Southern California's historical narrative and acknowledges the unique cultural, historical, and spiritual contributions of the Kizh Nation.

Conclusion

The Kizh Nation appreciates the City's commitment to preserving and highlighting the history of the First Peoples of Southern California. We urge the city to maintain clarity and focus on the original indigenous lineal ancestors of this land while honoring the current diversity of Native peoples in the region. Recognizing the distinction between ancestral ties and contemporary residency is essential for preserving the authenticity of this historic context.

Best regards,



Chief Andrew Salas
Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians–Kizh Nation