

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Supervisor Jim Venable


SUBMITTAL DATE: February 24, 2004

SUBJECT: Resolution 2004-108 – Resolution supporting the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians and passage of settlement legislation.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board join me in adopting Resolution No. 2004-108, a resolution supporting the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians and passage of settlement legislation.

BACKGROUND: The Soboba Indians have lived alongside the San Jacinto River in our County since the 16th century. We also know that the Band at one time flourished with lush agricultural fields until the water in the area disappeared when newcomers arrived and diverted and dammed the river and its tributaries. Now, after 10 years of negotiation, the Band has reached a settlement with the Eastern and Lake Hemet Municipal Water Districts and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California that will resolve a multitude of claims, some over a century old, for the disastrous effects of the lost water. The settlement also will quantify the Band's water rights and – together with a water management plan being developed by the area's non-Indian water users – will protect the water resources of the valley from future depletion. When approved by Congress and the President, the settlement will bring to a close more than 120 years of conflict and struggle between the Soboba Band and its neighbors over the San Jacinto River basin's water resources. Moreover, it will do so in a way that ensures not only the future of the Soboba Indians, but also the future of the region's water supply for the area's inhabitants.

I urge my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to adopt this resolution and in so doing show support for the Band and their desire to have this settlement legislation resolved quickly. We fully understand the Band's need for this legislation, and all that it will mean not only to the Band, but also to the economic health of the entire area.


Jim Venable, Supervisor
JV:msm

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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
RECORDS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2004-108

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE SUPPORTING THE SOBOBA
BAND OF LUISENO INDIANS AND PASSAGE OF SETTLEMENT LEGISLATION

WHEREAS, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors believes that it is important to protect and promote the tribal sovereign governmental rights, the cultural identity and the interests of federally recognized tribes; and

WHEREAS, the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians (Soboba Tribe) has lived in the area alongside the San Jacinto River in California where their reservation now exists since long before the Spaniards first arrived in the vicinity in the 16th century; and

WHEREAS, the Soboba Tribe built the first irrigation ditch in the San Jacinto Valley and when American settlers entered the valley in the 1860's the Soboba Tribe possessed a self-sustaining agricultural economy, built upon the Tribe's rich water resources; and

WHEREAS, the Soboba Tribe's water supplies began disappearing when the newcomers diverted water from the San Jacinto River and built dams in upstream tributaries; and

WHEREAS, by the dawn of the 20th century there was starvation in what had been a lush region of grape vineyards, rows of melons, beans and corn, and extensive orchards of peaches, pears, apricots and oranges; and

WHEREAS, in the 1930's the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California dug a 13-mile tunnel through the San Jacinto Mountains, about 3.5 miles northwest of the Soboba Tribe's reservation, which pierced underground faults and fractures in the mountains that dammed large amounts of water underneath the reservation, casing groundwater to flood into the tunnel and causing the springs, creeks and wells on the reservation to dry up; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, the Tribe sued the federal government in the Indian Claims Commission for failing to protect it from the effects of the San Jacinto tunnel, as well as from the groundwater pumping and upstream diversions of surface water that depleted the reservation's water resources; and

WHEREAS, the United States government settled the aforementioned lawsuit in 1991 and joined with the Tribe in attempting to negotiate an overall resolution of the reservation's water-related claims; and

WHEREAS, such negotiations involved the Eastern and Lake Hemet Municipal Water Districts, the Metropolitan Water District, the Department of Interior and the Soboba Tribe; and

1 WHEREAS, the parties finalized the terms of the settlement
of the land and water claims at the end of 2003 and have
introduced settlement legislation in the 108th Congress; and

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3 WHEREAS, the terms of the settlement for the Soboba Tribe
include; an adequate and secure future water supply, funds from
4 local water districts for economic development, funds from the
United States for water development and 128 acres of replacement
land for commercial development;

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6 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Riverside County
Board of Supervisors does hereby recognize the finalization of
7 the settlement between the Soboba Tribe, the Eastern and Lake
Hemet Municipal Water Districts, the Metropolitan Water District
and the Department of Interior; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Riverside County Board of
Supervisors encourages the full support of the settlement
10 legislation by the Department of Interior and urges the passage
by Congress of the Soboba Tribe's settlement legislation.

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