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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

## **California Native American Day Celebrates "Protecting Our People Through Sovereignty"**

### **56th Annual Event to be held September 22nd on West Steps of the Capitol**

**Sacramento, CA.—September 20—**The 56<sup>th</sup> annual California Native American Day will be held Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, on the West Steps of the State Capitol to celebrate the theme: "Protecting Our People Through Sovereignty: Past, Present and Future."

The event celebrates the culture and contributions of California Native Americans. This time-honored tradition brings together California Tribes, organizations, universities, and state agencies to honor and commemorate the valuable achievements by California Native Americans, throughout history and today.

"The California Tribal Chairpersons' Association is honored to host this important annual celebration of progress for our people," said Association Chairman Bo Mazzetti. "We thank our partners, the California Native American Heritage Commission and the California Native American Day Planning Committee, for their invaluable contributions to this event."

The event features a cultural heritage pavilion where attendees can learn more about traditional practices, 80 state and organization exhibitor booths, 25 arts and crafts vendors, and cultural sharing that includes traditional drums, bird songs, and dancing. Tribal and state leadership will highlight the progress made across the state to create and amend legislation to better respect and protect California Native Americans by advancing progress toward self-reliance and equality.

"We've made important progress through legislation to better exercise tribal sovereignty in order to best protect our people and our freedoms," said Assemblymember James Ramos. "I was especially appreciative that we succeeded earlier this year in

protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) at the federal level. Here in California, we are working to strengthen state protections for tribal families and foster youth so that future challenge to ICWA can also be overcome. As the first and only California Native American elected to the Legislature, I'm especially proud of these achievements."

Since his historic election in 2018, Ramos has authored a wide range of legislation, including AB 1314, which created the "Feather Alert" enabling law enforcement to issue emergency alerts (similar to an Amber Alert) for missing Native Americans; removing the statue of Father Junipero Serra from the Capitol and replacing it with a statue honoring a local tribal cultural leader; and a new law that grants access for federally recognized tribes to information through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) to help address the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP).

"California Native American Day holds special significance for the people of Wilton Rancheria as we welcome tribal citizens and the general public from across the state to our traditional homeland for a celebration of California Native American People," said Jesus Tarango, Chairman of Wilton Rancheria, the only federally recognized tribe in Sacramento County. "This year's theme, 'Protecting Our People Through Sovereignty: Past, Present, and Future,' was selected to highlight the importance of recognizing and respecting tribal sovereignty as tribes work to protect all their citizens, from those whose remains are being held by museums and universities, to our youth currently in protective services."

"On behalf of the California Native American Heritage Commission, and the California Native American Day Planning Committee, we are proud to partner with our host nation sponsor, the California Tribal Chairpersons' Association, in the coordination and planning of the 56th Annual California Native American Day celebration," said Native American Heritage Commission Executive Secretary Raymond C. Hitchcock. "To celebrate the first peoples of California is truly an honor and blessing!"

**For press inquiries, please contact:** Samantha Cypret at [scypret@wiltonrancheria-nsn.gov](mailto:scypret@wiltonrancheria-nsn.gov). Attending press should check in for credentials at Media Booth #36 located behind the main stage. Event agenda and map (both subject to change) available [here](#).