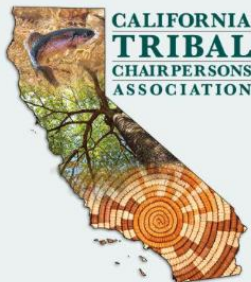


WELCOME: CALIFORNIA TRIBAL CHAIRPERSONS' ASSOCIATION



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59th Annual California Native American Day September 25, 2026

On behalf of the California Tribal Chairpersons' Association, it is my great honor to welcome you to the **59th Annual California Native American Day**.

As we gather here at the California State Capitol, we do so with gratitude and respect for the Miwok, Nisenan, and Patwin People, whose ancestral homelands have long stewarded this place. We honor their enduring relationship with these lands and recognize all California Tribal Nations whose histories, cultures, and inherent sovereignty continue to shape our state.

California Native American Day is more than an annual celebration. It is an opportunity to honor those who came before us, celebrate the richness and diversity of our cultures, recognize the accomplishments and resilience of our communities, and reaffirm our shared responsibility to protect our people, our lands, and our future.

This year's theme, "**Inherent Sovereignty: Tribal Nations Fighting to Protect Our People and Defend Our Land**," reflects the work Tribal Nations undertake every day. Our sovereignty did not begin with recognition of legislation, it has existed since time immemorial, guiding our governments, our responsibilities, and our commitment to future generations. Through our leadership, traditions, advocacy, and partnerships, we continue to uphold that responsibility and ensure our communities remain strong.

This celebration would not be possible without the dedication of so many individuals and organizations. On behalf of California Tribal Chairpersons' Association, I extend my sincere appreciation to Assemblymember James C. Ramos and the California Native American Legislative Caucus for their steadfast leadership and commitment to California Tribal Nations. I also thank Governor Gavin Newsom and the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs for their continued partnership and support.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the California Native American Day Planning Committee, our cultural performers, and Carl Avery (Yurok) for creating this year's beautiful commemorative artwork. I also extend my appreciation to our Native artists, informational exhibitors, Cultural Heritage Pavilion participants, food vendors, community partners, and volunteers whose dedication and contributions make this celebration possible.

Finally, thank you to everyone joining us today: Tribal Leaders, Elders, Tribal Citizens, youth, elected officials, educators, students, community members, partners, and guests. Your presence reflects our shared commitment to honoring California's First People, celebration our living cultures, and strengthening the relationships that will carry us forward together.

Welcome, and thank you for celebrating with us!

Erica M. Pinto
CTCA Chairwoman
Jamul Indian Village of California

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