



# San Bernardino County

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 4624, Agenda Item #: 30**

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**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

**July 27, 2021**

**FROM**

**MELISSA RUSSO, Director, Museum**

**SUBJECT**

Approve and Establish Land Acknowledgment to Honor Serrano Peoples Legacy

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Approve and authorize the County Museum to establish and publicly post in the museum facilities and on the website a Land Acknowledgment statement recognizing the historic territorial lands of the Serrano people, ancestors of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

(Presenter: Melissa Russo, Director, 798-8608)

**COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

**Promote the Countywide Vision.**

**Pursue County Goals and Objectives by Working with Other Agencies and Stakeholders.**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

This item does not impact Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost).

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The San Bernardino County Museum (Museum) proposes the establishment of a Land Acknowledgment. These acknowledgments have been a traditional custom amongst tribes that dates back centuries. In collaboration with local tribes, these statements are being increasingly established in museums across the country, as well as by other organizations and governmental entities.

The Land Acknowledgment language for which the Museum seeks Board approval is as follows:

“San Bernardino County Museum acknowledges that the land on which our facilities are sited is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Maara'yam, commonly referred to as the Serrano people, which, in the contemporary era, are represented by two federally recognized tribes: the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and Morongo Band of Mission Indians. We also acknowledge that in the historic era other tribal communities and European settlers intersected with Serrano peoples in these spaces. Our histories and stories are intertwined in this space, and by sharing them in culturally appropriate ways and co-stewarding collections, we hope to honor and celebrate our indigenous neighbors and partners. We also seek to offer an accurate, clear and thorough picture of this region's complicated past and create a shared vision for the future that is mutually beneficial and respectful to all.”

Further, the Museum requests permission to post this land acknowledgment statement at the main Museum in Redlands, the Victor Valley Museum, and the Yucaipa Adobe as these specific sites are located on Serrano ancestral lands.

Land acknowledgments are brief statements, usually publicly posted in the building to which they refer, and on the website hosted by that entity, which recognize and celebrate the history of the land and area on which the physical facility sits, which was once inhabited by an indigenous, native people. They are meant to honor the current descendants of the indigenous culture, by recognizing the traditional territory or geographic area over which their ancestors exercised stewardship. The acknowledgment is ceremonial.

In meetings with representatives from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians prior to March 2020, and recently in virtual communications, tribal representatives have repeatedly indicated a strong interest in, and support for the Museum establishing a Land Acknowledgment statement. In accordance with best practice recommendations from the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum consulted with staff at San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and Morongo Band of Mission Indians to ensure their support for the language in the proposed Land Acknowledgment.

The statement reflects the Museum's intentional practice to be purposeful, honest, and accountable in our public service work, and to build trust and fellowship with our museum partners. As an educational institution and steward of a significant collection of tribal cultural material, we embrace the Land Acknowledgment as an entry point and pathway for public education and for helping to foster an inclusive and equitable community. The statement may be a museum visitor's first experience hearing about the Serrano and other Indigenous People in the area, which gives the Museum a means to increase the cultural literacy of our visitors.

#### **PROCUREMENT**

N/A.

#### **REVIEW BY OTHERS**

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Katherine Hardy, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5455) on June 1, 2021; County Counsel (Michelle Blakemore, County Counsel, 387-5445) on July 23, 2021; Finance (Elias Duenas, Administrative Analyst, 387-4052) on June 14, 2021; and County Finance and Administration (Robert Saldana, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on June 14, 2021.