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**AB275 (RAMOS) CONTINUES TO ENFORCE  
STATE SPONSORED GENOCIDE AGAINST CALIFORNIA TRIBES**

Sacramento, CA—California Tribal members came out in large numbers to voice their opposition to AB 275 (Ramos) at the California Native American Heritage Commission’s (NAHC) July 19 meeting in West Sacramento. AB 275 would allow only non-federally recognized tribes that have petitioned for federal recognition to re-bury the remains of their ancestors inadvertently discovered on public or private property. Current law makes no such distinction between California tribes. Assembly Member James Ramos (D) (San Bernardino, 40<sup>th</sup> District), the first California Native American elected to the California Legislature, introduced Assembly Bill 275: Cultural Preservation (AB 275) this session. The bill mandates that each state agency create a tribal liaison position within the agency and changes the definition of a California Tribes that can make recommendations regarding the treatment and disposition of their ancestors’ inadvertently discovered remains in Public Resources Code Section 5097.94. Ironically, instead of cultural preservation, AB 275 aims to eliminate almost all “non-federally recognized” tribes – tribes that are identified as tribes by the State, but do not enjoy a “trust relationship” with the federal government – from being able to re-bury their ancestors after their graves have been desecrated and their remains disinterred.

Opposition to the bill’s controversial definition change was made clear at the NAHC’s quarterly July public meeting this past Friday. California tribal people from all across the State voiced their opposition to AB 275 to the Tribal Advisor to Governor Newsom and Executive Secretary of the NAHC, Christina Snider, one after another at the meeting. Unified in their horror of such a bill, they expressed the hypocrisy of the bill given Governor Newsom’s historic and overdue apology for the State’s role in perpetuating the genocide against California Native people and tribes. They decried the bill as being “anti-tribal sovereignty” and declared that the State of California had no right, “no business” in telling tribes to become federally recognized when the federal recognition system is flawed and refuses to acknowledge the same genocide Governor Newsom apologized for on June 18, 2019. The California tribal people speaking at the hearing collectively demanded that the Governor’s apology be put into action. The California tribal people also demanded that the NAHC hold a special hearing to vote to publicly oppose the bill.

If AB 275 continues to move through the Senate without change, the bill would deny up to one-third of California Tribes, that currently have reburial rights, the basic human right to re-bury their ancestors. *“When they came for our ancestors, they did not ask if they were federally recognized or not, they did not ask if you came from a reservation. They killed us, hunted us down, took our children and raped our women because they were natives. No distinction was made. Every California Tribe should be allowed to re-bury their ancestors in their own way, with their own tradition. Trying to make a tribe do something that’s not in their people’s best interest, like applying for federal recognition, is not right and the State of*

*California has no business – especially after the Governor’s apology to ALL of us for the genocide- to demand that,”* declared Wounded Knee Deocampo, a Miwok elder and American Indian Movement activist at the NAHC hearing. Unfortunately, the NAHC failed to achieve a quorum in order to conduct business again this year and no action was taken. AB 275 is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 12 at the State Capitol, Room 4203, at 10:00 am.

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