



The Office of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Council

Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay  
1169 South Main Street, #336  
Manteca, CA 95337

**Muwekma.org**  
[muwekma@muwekma.org](mailto:muwekma@muwekma.org)  
408-852-1677

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For more information: Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh  
[Muwekma@muwekma.org](mailto:Muwekma@muwekma.org)  
408-852-1677

## **Muwekma Ohlone Tribe Calls for the Return of the San Francisco Presidio**

*Rematriating the historic fortress would be America's most significant #LandBack initiative to date*

**San Francisco, CA** — The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area is submitting a [formal presidential request](#) to return the federally-run San Francisco Presidio property to the supervision of the tribe — a move which would reduce federal taxpayer spending and constitute one of the most significant rematriations of Indigenous land in U.S. history.

The tribe's request comes on the heels of President Donald J. Trump's recent executive order to dissolve the Presidio Trust, the federal agency tasked by Congress with redeveloping the former military base in 1996. The tribe is also co-hosting, with indigenous advocacy organization the Lakota People's Law Project, a [petition where the public can express their support](#).

"This is an opportunity for President Trump to do what the state of California has failed to do," says Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Chairwoman Charlene Nijmeh. "Not only will returning the Presidio to Indigenous care be the right thing for our people and for the land, but it will also save the federal government — and taxpayers — money."

For decades, the Presidio Trust has served as a lucrative base of patronage for the political machine led by former Senator Diane Feinstein and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, who both have made their homes within blocks of this section of San Francisco.

According to Nijmeh, both elected officials have been staunchly opposed to the tribe's 45-year struggle to reaffirm its federal status. When the Tribe submitted a Right of First Refusal to the federal government during the decommissioning of the military installation in 1992, both women were opposed.

"I don't want an Indian Tribe in my City," Feinstein told the former tribal chairwoman at the time, a statement that Nijmeh says still offends tribal officials today.

“Despite widespread support for our tribe from their constituents, Senator Feinstein, Speaker Pelosi, and Rep. Zoe Lofgren have always opposed our attempts to gain federal recognition and rematriate the Presidio,” Nijmeh says. “Four county Democratic party committees have passed formal resolutions in support of our renewed federal recognition. Now, as the current administration works to eliminate the Presidio Trust as part of its effort to streamline the federal workforce, we stand ready to offer a cost-effective, environmentally and culturally responsible solution to filling the stewardship void.”

The Presidio was historically inhabited by Ohlone ancestors for countless generations. Returning it to the tribe’s care represents not only a chance to rectify historical wrongs but also an opportunity for a cultural renaissance for the indigenous communities of the Bay Area.

**### END ###**

### **Support the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe**

To get involved and support this #Landback initiative please visit <https://muwekma.org/presidio/>. For additional quotes, interviews, pictures, video footage, or other information, please contact us via email at [muwekma@muwekma.org](mailto:muwekma@muwekma.org) or via phone at 408-852-1677.

### **About the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe**

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe is at the National Mall in Washington D.C. through the coming election, on their Trail of Truth, to advocate for the return of the tribe’s federal recognition, which would give them the ability to operate as other federally recognized tribes do and protect their histories, cultures, and lifeways as a legal entity.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe was previously federally recognized as the Verona Band of Alameda County, was never terminated by an act of Congress, and a federal district court judge in the Northern District of California affirmed that the Tribe has retained its sovereign immunity despite not being on the BIA’s list of officially recognized Tribes.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs erred when it wrongly omitted the Tribe from the official list of recognized Tribes when that list was first drafted in 1978. The Tribe has struggled for more than 45-years to affirm its federal status, petitioning the Congress for legislative recognition and petitioning the Administration for corrective action.

**Learn more and take action to help the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe reclaim their ancestral land back at <https://action.lakotalaw.org/action/muwekma-presidio>**

The Lakota People’s Law Project and Jacobson Communication are acting as press and media partners assisting efforts to restore federal recognition and stewardship of the Presidio to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. For questions, bookings, and other follow-up, please reach out to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe directly using the info provided above.