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## Kamlager-Dove Introduces Legislation to Recognize the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation in Los Angeles

January 2, 2024 | [Press Release](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** - January 2, 2024

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**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove (CA-37) introduced H.R. 6859, the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation Recognition Act, to Federally recognize the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation whose villages were located in the Los Angeles Basin for thousands of years. These villages were located near and around the ever-changing Los Angeles River, San Gabriel River, Santa Ana River, and the coastal areas, with over 2,000 Gabrielino/Tongva archaeological sites in Los Angeles County, Orange County, and the Channel Islands.

California is currently home to 109 Federally recognized Tribes across the state. In 1994, California officially recognized the Gabrielino/Tongva as "the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles Basin." The Gabrielino/Tongva Nation Recognition Act would grant them up to 300 acres of land to be taken into trust by the Department of Interior if signed into law and would afford the Gabrielino/Tongva people the ability to participate in scholarships for Native Americans, access healthcare services through the Indian Health Service, obtain educational and housing assistance, possess eagle feathers to practice their religious beliefs, or acquire and honor the remains of their ancestors, among the many other privileges only given to Federally recognized Tribes.

"I am glad to introduce this legislation to Federally recognize the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation," said **Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove**. "It is critical for Indigenous individuals to have access to the resources afforded to the Federally recognized Tribes from education and employment opportunities to health care and beyond. I will continue to work in Congress to support the Indigenous communities across California and the rest of our nation."

"We are grateful to Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove for championing the cause of the Gabrielino/Tongva people and helping us right the wrongs of history," said **Gabrielino/Tongva Chairwoman Sandonne Goad**. "Our history is one of enslavement and oppression. We have been wrongly denied federal recognition for generations despite our deep and formative connections to this region as well as our inclusion on the LA County seal. Federal recognition is the first step to bringing dignity to the Gabrielino/Tongva tribe and ensuring the longevity of our people and culture."

The Los Angeles Basin as well as the islands of Santa Catalina, San Nicholas, San Clemente, and Santa Barbara (from Topanga Canyon to Laguna Beach) are the traditional homelands of the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation.

Spanish settlers first enslaved the Tongva people in 1772, forcing members of the tribe to build the Mission de San Gabriel Arcangel on their own land. This began a long and continuous subjugation of the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation lasting over 100 years, which included forced labor and mistreatment by European settlers and governments alike. Gabrielino/Tongva children were also removed from their homes, assimilated into settler cultures and stripped of their Gabrielino/Tongva identity at the St. Boniface Indian Industrial and Sherman Indian Schools.

To read the full text of the bill, click [here](#).

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118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6859

To extend the Federal recognition to the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation, and  
for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To extend the Federal recognition to the Gabrielino/Tongva  
Nation, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Gabrielino/Tongva Na-  
5 tion Recognition Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) MEMBER.—The term “member” means an  
9 individual who is a citizen of the Tribe pursuant to  
10 the Tribe’s Constitution, enacted February 17,

1       2007, and who is enrolled in the Tribe pursuant to  
2       section 7 of this Act.

3               (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
4       the Secretary of the Interior.

5               (3) TRIBE.—The term “Tribe” means the  
6       Gabrielino/Tongva Nation, also known as Gabrielino-  
7       Tongva Indian Tribe and the Gabrielino-Tongva  
8       Tribe.

9       **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

10       Congress finds the following:

11               (1) The traditional homelands of the  
12       Gabrielino/Tongva Nation are the Los Angeles Basin  
13       and the islands of Santa Catalina, San Nicholas,  
14       San Clemente, and Santa Barbara, from Topanga  
15       Canyon to Laguna Beach, from the San Gabriel  
16       Mountains to the sea. Over 2,000 archaeological  
17       sites in the in the Los Angeles County Basin attest  
18       to the longevity of Gabrielino/Tongva presence in  
19       their homelands.

20               (2) In 1891, in response to the impoverished  
21       conditions experienced by Indian Tribes sent to the  
22       California missions, Congress passed the Act of Jan-  
23       uary 12, 1891 (26 Stat. 711) commonly known as  
24       the Mission Indian Relief Act, which created a spe-  
25       cial Indian agency with trust responsibilities over

1 “Mission Indians” in California, including the  
2 Gabrielino/Tongva.

3 (3) In 1928, members of the Gabrielino/Tongva  
4 community, many of whom were then living in their  
5 traditional homelands in the Los Angeles Basin, en-  
6 rolled during the California Indian census taken pur-  
7 suant to the Act of May 18, 1928 (45 Stat. 602),  
8 which identified them as “Mission San Gabriel” or  
9 “Gabrielino” Indians and under the Federal jurisdic-  
10 tion of the Mission Indian Agency in Riverside, Cali-  
11 fornia.

12 (4) In 1952, a congressional report named the  
13 Gabrielino/Tongva, known at that time as  
14 “Gabrieleño or San Gabriel Indians,” as one of the  
15 Indian Tribes or bands identified in dealings with  
16 the Bureau of Indian Affairs (82d Cong., 2d sess.,  
17 House, Report No. 2503).

18 (5) In 1972, Gabrielino/Tongva people received  
19 settlement funds from the judgment of the Indian  
20 Claims Commission in Docket 80 and 80–D under  
21 the Act of September 21, 1968 (Public Law 90–507;  
22 82 Stat. 860).

23 (6) In 1994, the State of California recognized  
24 the Tongva in Assembly Joint Resolution 96,  
25 chaptered by the California Secretary of State as

1 Resolution chapter 146, Statutes of 1994. The Joint  
2 Resolution states that the State of California “rec-  
3 ognizes the Gabrielinos as the aboriginal tribe of the  
4 Los Angeles Basin and takes great pride in recog-  
5 nizing the Indian inhabitation of the Los Angeles  
6 Basin and the continued existence of the Indian  
7 community”.

8 (7) In 1999, the Coastal Gabrielino-Diegueno  
9 Band of Mission Indians, the legal predecessor to  
10 the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation, filed evidence of its  
11 members’ Gabrielino ancestry with the Bureau of In-  
12 dian Affairs, using certificates of degree of Indian  
13 blood prepared by the Act of September 21, 1968.

14 (8) In 2001, the Coastal Gabrielino-Diegueno  
15 Band of Mission Indians reorganized, ultimately  
16 changing its name to the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation,  
17 and opening enrollment to individuals with  
18 Gabrielino ancestry certified by the Bureau of In-  
19 dian Affairs.

20 (9) In 2013, the Los Angeles City Council, in  
21 Resolution 13-1285, declared its support of the  
22 Gabrielino/Tongva Nation in its efforts to restore a  
23 government-to-government relationship with the  
24 United States.

1           (10) In 2019, the Superior Court for the Coun-  
2       ty of Los Angeles found that the Gabrielino/Tongva  
3       Nation was the legal successor in interest to the  
4       Coastal Gabrielino-Diegueno Band of Mission Indi-  
5       ans.

6           (11) The Gabrielino/Tongva Nation presently  
7       has a membership of more than 700 Tribal citizens,  
8       all of whom descend from a bona fide Gabrielino/  
9       Tongva ancestor enumerated on a California Indian  
10      Roll prepared by Bureau of Indian Affairs pursuant  
11      to the Act of May 18, 1928, Act of May 24, 1950  
12      (64 Stat. 189), and Act of September 21, 1968, and  
13      whose ancestors have received Indian services, in-  
14      cluding education or health care, based upon their  
15      status as Indians.

16   **SEC. 4. FEDERAL RECOGNITION.**

17       (a) IN GENERAL.—Federal recognition is extended to  
18      the Tribe.

19       (b) EFFECT OF FEDERAL LAWS.—Except as other-  
20      wise provided in this Act, all Federal laws (including regu-  
21      lations) of general application to Indians and Indian  
22      Tribes, including the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C.  
23      5101 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Indian Reorga-  
24      nization Act”), shall apply to the Tribe and each member.

1 **SEC. 5. FEDERAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of enact-  
3 ment of this Act, the Tribe and each member shall be eligi-  
4 ble for all services and benefits provided by the United  
5 States to Indians and federally recognized Indian Tribes,  
6 without regard to—

7 (1) the existence of a reservation for the Tribe;

8 or

9 (2) the location of the residence of any member  
10 on or near an Indian reservation.

11 (b) SERVICE AREA.—For purposes of the delivery of  
12 services and benefits to members, and in regard to land  
13 and the transfer of land as set forth in section 8 of this  
14 Act, the service area of the Tribe shall be considered to  
15 be the area comprised of Los Angeles County, in the State  
16 of California. Such services and benefits shall be provided  
17 notwithstanding the establishment of a reservation or ac-  
18 quisition of additional land after the date of enactment  
19 of this Act.

20 **SEC. 6. REAFFIRMATION OF RIGHTS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act diminishes  
22 any right or privilege of the Tribe or any member that  
23 existed before the date of enactment of this Act.

24 (b) CLAIMS OF TRIBE.—Except as otherwise pro-  
25 vided in this Act, nothing in this Act alters or affects any  
26 legal or equitable claim of the Tribe to enforce any right

1 or privilege reserved by, or granted to, the Tribe that was  
2 wrongfully denied to, or taken from, the Tribe before the  
3 date of enactment of this Act.

4 **SEC. 7. MEMBERSHIP ROLL.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Tribe shall submit to the Sec-  
6 retary within thirty days after the date of enactment of  
7 this Act, a membership roll consisting of the name of each  
8 individual enrolled as a member of the Tribe.

9 (b) DETERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—The quali-  
10 fications for inclusion on the membership roll of the Tribe  
11 shall be determined in accordance with the Tribe's Con-  
12 stitution, enacted February 17, 2007, any amendments or  
13 changes to the Constitution, or Tribal laws pertaining to  
14 membership. Upon receipt of the roll, the Secretary shall  
15 immediately publish notice of such in the Federal Reg-  
16 ister.

17 (c) MAINTENANCE OF ROLL.—The Tribe shall have  
18 the sole authority and responsibility to maintain the mem-  
19 bership roll of the Tribe.

20 **SEC. 8. TRANSFER OF LAND.**

21 (a) INITIAL RESEVATION.—Within ninety days from  
22 the date of enactment of this Act, and notwithstanding  
23 any other provision of law, the Secretary shall acquire and  
24 take into trust for the benefit of the Tribe title to land



1 identified by the Tribe that is located within the service  
2 area of the Tribe, not to exceed 300 acres.

3 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—Lands taken into trust will be  
4 deemed part of the restoration of lands for an Indian  
5 Tribe that is restored to Federal recognition pursuant to  
6 section 20(b)(1)(B)(iii) of the Indian Gaming Regulatory  
7 Act (25 U.S.C. 2719(b)(1)(B)(iii)).

8 (c) ADDITIONAL LANDS.—The Secretary may acquire  
9 additional land for the benefit of the Tribe pursuant to  
10 section 5 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (25 U.S.C. 5108)  
11 (commonly known as the “Indian Reorganization Act”).

12 (d) TRIBAL FEE LANDS.—Notwithstanding any  
13 other provision of law, without further approval, ratifica-  
14 tion, or authorization by the United States, the Tribe may  
15 lease, sell, convey, warrant, or otherwise transfer all or  
16 any part its interest in any real property that is (1) not  
17 located within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation,  
18 and (2) not held in trust by the United States for the  
19 benefit of the Tribe.

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