

West Bank Homeowners Association

P. O. Box 970 Blythe, California 92226

TEL: (760) 921-3339

email: westbank@cox.net

August 1, 2004

Honorable Mary Bono
44th District, California
707 Tahquitz Canyon Way Ste 9
Palm Springs, CA 92262

RE: Colorado River Indian Tribes
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Dear Representative Bono:

Please find attached a letter dated June 3, 2004 that we received from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Apparently, the letter is signed by newly appointed Director, Brian Pogue; however, no name appears on the letter, only an illegible signature. This letter appears to be the response by the Dept of the Interior to letters sent by our membership to Secretary Gale Norton.

In March of this year, residents, family members, and friends sent approximately 2,000 letters to Secretary Gale Norton requesting that the 1969 Secretarial Order of January 17, 1969, be rescinded. Copies of some of these letters were sent to your office. It appears by the response from BIA Director Pogue that our letters may have never reached the Secretary, and were instead diverted to or intercepted by the BIA. Since the nature of our request regarding the Secretarial Order puts the BIA in an adversarial position relative to our interests, and the BIA is 90% staffed by Native Americans, and the BIA is chartered to serve the interests of Native Americans, we are appalled that the Dept of the Interior would delegate to the BIA the task of providing Interior's response.

This action by the federal government is outrageous and unacceptable.

The response by BIA Director Pogue is predictable; a complete disregard for the merits of the arguments presented in the letters to the Secretary, and a curt deferral to a prior letter sent to your office by Interior's Office of the Solicitor. (We addressed the Solicitor's letter in correspondence to your office dated July 28, 2004.)

I'm sure you will agree that effectively tossing out 2,000 letters from your constituents is not an acceptable response by the federal government. We implore you to demand that the Dept of the Interior retrieve these letters from the BIA and deliver them to their intended destination, Secretary Gale Norton. And we would very much appreciate any effort on your part to secure a response from the Secretary.

Again, we very much appreciate your continued assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Roger L. French
President