

56 Hughes Rd
PO Box 398
Madison, AL. 35758
June 21, 2018

Dear Elm Indian Colony of Pomo Indians of the Sulphur Bank Rancheria
and Chairperson Augustin Garcia,

My name is Laura Boak. I live in Alabama with my husband and children. I was originally born and raised near Salt Lake City Utah to parents who are of white Anglo European ancestry. These ancestors of mine came to America as settlers starting from the late 1600's until the mid 1800's.

For the past several months, I've been learning of many events in early American history that I did not learn in school as a child, nor as an adult later in life. In these historical events, my government forefathers and settler ancestors showed relentless determination to remove, subdue and extinguish the Native peoples of this country. From what I've gathered, it seems that much of America's success and prosperity was achieved by trampling over Native Americans such as yourselves.

Before this journey of mine into early American history with Natives Americans, I knew almost nothing about this. I am faced with the reality of my ignorance, and trying to understand how this happened. But what I am sure of, is that I can no longer carry on, as an American, the same as I always have. At this point I feel great shame. I feel great heartache. And at this point, I wish desperately to reach out to you and apologize.

Dear friends, I am so very sorry that my ancestors and government forefathers arrogantly stomped into your terrain and robbed you of your ancestral homelands which you held and nurtured for thousands of years. On their best behavior, they treated you like second class citizens, on their worst, they fiercely terrorized you.

I am so deeply sorry that my ancestors and government shattered your communal property system of living off the land, then took more resources from your land than what was sustainable, leaving a great number of animals to die, and leaving you with little resources or starvation. They disregarded the sacredness of your land and ways while harming the wildlife you revere and depend upon.

I am deeply sorry for the huge losses of your population due to my ancestors carelessly or knowingly exposing you to their deadly diseases such as small pox, cholera, dysentery, influenza, syphilis, pneumonia diphtheria, scarlet fever, tuberculosis and measles.

I am greatly sorry that my Christian ancestors and missionaries ignorantly imposed their culture and religion onto yours. Instead of listening and learning from your ways, they betrayed basic decency when they participated in the robbing of your lands, the stripping of your dignity, and the erasing of many lives. The inhumanity showed by my Christian and secular ancestors is a deep blemish in our spirit.

designated lands while my government sells these lands out from under you, unlawfully, and to the highest bidder of corrupt American industry.

I am deeply sorry for how history has been recounted in American history books, about the interactions between my ancestors and yours. Little or no mention is given to the accounts of brutality against you. And little or no mention is given to the accounts of survival skills you taught to early settlers, nor to the peaceful and spiritual ways you lived by, nor to the contributions your men and women made in foreign wars to assist America. These incomplete and doctored histories have deceived generations upon generations of white and non-white immigrants to America.

I am so very sorry that every 3rd Thursday of November, American families gather in celebration to pat themselves on the back for the good turn their pilgrim ancestors did to co-exist with the Natives of this country. I am sorry that I personally have turned a blind eye to the true story of this false holiday - afraid to learn the truth of the extent with which my white ancestors took advantage of your generosity and trust.

I am troubled and deeply sorry for my governments continual irresponsibility toward your best interests. In their lust for profit, they wrongly took and continue to take extremely large sums of your money earned through industry in your communities, reservations, rancheria's and land trusts, only to distribute this money unwisely or unfairly. They continue to put money ahead of your longevity and quality of life. They work to serve themselves instead of serving your needs. And I am so disappointed that they have come up so short in making reparations for their ugly past.

I am so sorry for the great degradation and harm done to the ecology of your lands through pollution, oil extraction, mining, fisheries, animal hunting, water usage and global warming. The greed of my culture and of 'big industry' have marred and debased your pristine lands, and in some areas have enveloped your economy into dependency upon them. These violations have occurred in the name of 'American industry and progress.' This is a pure farce and hypocritical abomination.

I am embarrassed and sorry for the many professional and non-professional sports teams in America that still use First Nations Peoples as mascots. And with that, I also apologize for the racism and stereotypes that still exist today in the media and American culture.

I must also apologize for the non-Native peoples of my culture that call themselves 'New Age Shamans,' and 'Holy Men' who have used your spiritual practices for their own gain without formally receiving your sacred wisdom and ceremonial practices. I regret participating in all mock Native ceremonies that were not led by a true Shaman or Holy person of indigenous American origin.

I am honestly sorry for the apathy that still plagues many people of my race, culture and society toward your livelihoods and circumstances. I am concerned that the high rates of poverty, drug/alcohol abuse and suicides in your communities are a result of everything I've mentioned. I am deeply sorry and ashamed of that. After hundreds of years of harm toward you, which were the greatest crimes ever committed on this continent, so many of us have claimed ignorance and have turned our eyes and ears away from it. More of my ancestors and modern day citizens should have rallied behind you in the fight for your lives and rights, including protection for the ecosystem, and the fight for money owed to you through land trusts, land use and industry.

Its commonly believed that the American flag symbolizes purity, valor, vigilance, perseverance, and justice. I am utterly astonished at the failure of much of my government and culture to reach these ideals (for the good of humanity). And I include myself in this charge. I do recognize that