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October 20, 2026

Imperial County Board of Supervisors
and Clerk of the Board
940 W. Main Street, suite 209
El Centro, CA 92243-2839

Dear Board of Supervisors and Clerk:

This letter is sent in reference to the remarks of District 5 Supervisor John Hawk in describing a recent transportation commission meeting. His remarks demonstrated a remarkable degree of callousness and lack of empathy for a community issue that is creating a tremendous safety and economic issue problem: reconstruction of the Picacho Road Bridge. As Supervisor Hawk himself stated, ["This is not just a bridge that we're looking at here. This is a lifeline to the entire Bard-Quechan community."](#) As the issue greatly and directly affects the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, 75 tribal members attended the transportation meeting to share concerns about lack of sufficient tribal input and inclusion on the bridge's future. Supervisor Hawk publicly described the meeting as "brutal" and stated that he felt as though he were being "scalped."

Quechan Indian Tribe representative, Michael Jack, reflected the views of many community members who said Supervisor Hawk's language was a racial slur and offensive to the supervisor's Native American constituents. I condemn Supervisor Hawk's language. As the first and only California Native American elected to the legislature and as chair of the California Native American Legislative Caucus, I join Mr. Jack in calling for an apology to the people of the Quechan Nation. His words, and the history evoked by his choice of words carry harmful connotations and are unacceptable.

I also strongly urge a meaningful respectful inclusion and consultation with the tribe about restoring the bridge's role as a "lifeline." The bridge is essential for emergency responders and for economic vitality.

As elected officials we must all respond to contentious situations and anger, but we are elected to represent and serve all our constituents. Again, I call for an apology to the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian People and for meaningful inclusion and consultation with the tribe as work on the bridge moves forward.

Sincerely,

James C. Ramos
Assemblymember, District 45