

State of New Mexico



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News Release

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Attorney General Madrid and Governor Richardson Join U.S. Supreme Court Legal Battle

(Santa Fe, NM) New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid and Governor Bill Richardson are filing a friend of the court brief before the U. S. Supreme Court in a case brought by a California Indian tribe against a California Sheriff's department. Joining New Mexico in this brief are Washington State Attorney General Christine Gregoire, Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard and Montana Attorney General Michael McGrath.

"In New Mexico, the experience is one of Tribes and State and local authorities working together for the mutual benefit of all New Mexicans. The California law enforcement agency in this case raised a specter of Indian reservations becoming havens for criminals. Our legal brief informs the United States Supreme Court about the level of cooperation between Indian Tribes and the States of New Mexico, Washington, Arizona, and Montana with respect to law enforcement matters that cross state tribal borders. The experience of our states is in sharp contrast to the portrayal in the sheriff's brief. We must object to the sheriff's generalization from its experience with the Paiute-Shoshone Indians to other states. New Mexico's experience has been one of mutual respect between the State and Tribes," Attorney General Madrid said.

"It is important that the U.S. Supreme Court be told the whole story about tribal-state relations. In New Mexico, we do not use bolt cutters and search warrants against Indian tribes to conduct our criminal investigations," Governor Bill Richardson said. "We have had great success using intergovernmental agreements with Indian tribes to ensure that there is adequate law enforcement for all New Mexicans. We felt compelled to bring to the Supreme Court's attention the reality that states and tribes do work together cooperatively and share the same interest of protecting their citizens and bringing criminals to justice. The filing of this *amicus curiae* brief is unprecedented and long overdue. I am proud that New Mexico is at the forefront of this issue and that our sister states of Montana, Washington and Arizona have joined us."

Governor Denny Gutierrez, who is in his fourth term as Governor of the Pueblo of Santa Clara, said today that he had "nothing but praise and gratitude for the courageous action" by New

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Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid and Governor Bill Richardson in filing a brief on behalf of the State in the *Inyo County* case in the United States Supreme Court.

“The Supreme Court needs to hear from those states like New Mexico, that have established many constructive, positive relationships with the tribes within their borders by means of intergovernmental agreements, in the areas of law enforcement, assessment and collection of taxes, and others,” said Santa Clara Pueblo Governor Denny Gutierrez. “I am very gratified that New Mexico has taken the lead among the states in undertaking this unprecedented filing, and I congratulate Attorney General Madrid and Governor Richardson. And I am confident that this gesture will not only be highly persuasive to the Court, but also will greatly improve state-tribal relations in New Mexico for some time to come, as it demonstrates that New Mexico really takes its relationships with the tribes seriously.”

Santa Ana Pueblo Governor Myron Armijo said “We are amazed and very pleased at the truly historic action of Attorney General Patricia Madrid and Gov. Bill Richardson, in taking the lead in filing this brief,” Gov. Armijo said. “Although we have certainly had our differences with the State from time to time, it is true that New Mexico has been a leader in dealing with the Tribes within its borders on a government-to-government basis, and that attitude of mutual respect has ultimately been to the benefit of all New Mexicans.”

"The Pueblo of Laguna applauds this historic gesture by the State of New Mexico in support of tribal sovereignty and constructive tribal-state relations. The State's brief strongly demonstrates that the State of New Mexico understands that is better for all of us when we work together on issues of mutual concern," said Governor Roland Johnson of the Pueblo of Laguna.

The case before the U.S. Supreme Court is *Inyo County v. Paiute-Shoshone Indians*.

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