



## California Indian Legal Services

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Attorney at Law

December 2, 2010

Dear Tribal & Community Supporters of CILS:

California Indian Legal Services was created over 40 years ago by California Indian leaders and public interest attorneys. CILS is the first Indian-controlled law firm organized to provide specialized legal representation to Indians and Indian tribes. Over our time working with California Indians and Indian tribes, we have watched this community develop and grow. California tribes maintain unique cultural and legal identities and for that reason CILS has pledged to prioritize the fundamental legal needs of the California tribal community, including the protection of cultural and sacred places, protection of Indian children, the restoration and protection of tribal lands, and more.

CILS operates four offices throughout California, providing services over the entire state. We are supported by grants from the federal Legal Services Corporation, the State Bar of California and private foundations. We also provide contracted services for many of the 110 federally-recognized Indian tribes and countless Indian organizations. Finally, we rely on monetary and in-kind support from our tribal and corporate communities to ensure the special needs of our community are met.

Over the last five years CILS has restructured our priorities to provide a more broad based approach to the delivery of Indian legal services to California Indian individuals and tribes. In addition to serving thousands of low income Indian individuals on a variety of Indian and poverty law issues, CILS has developed four core project work groups, including *Indian Child Welfare*, *Indian Fiscal & Taxation*, *Tribal Trust Asset & Probate*, and *Tribal Governance*, which includes our *Annual Tribal Courts Conference*. While CILS' grant funds provide a portion of the resources needed for this work, the demand is greater than our resources permit. Additionally, restrictions on the use of government funding prohibit us from engaging in certain activities that greatly benefit California tribes. Examples include *Legislative Advocacy: California and Nationwide*; *State & Federal Agency Regulation & Rulemaking*; *State Court Advocacy*; *Religious freedom for Native Prisoners*; and *services to over-income clients* who still lack the resources to retain legal services.

We are requesting your support of our 2010 Fundraising Campaign. Our enclosed contribution form details our campaign goals. Your contribution will support the many essential tribal legal services we provide that will go unfunded without additional resources.

I welcome the opportunity to provide you further information to assist you in evaluating our request. We have included our 2009-2010 Annual Report and I encourage you to visit our website at [www.calindian.org](http://www.calindian.org) to see the success of our past year. I can be reached in my office at 760-746-8941, ext. 119 or via cell phone at 619-920-3154. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of our California Indian community.

Sincerely,

CALIFORNIA INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES

Devon Lee Lomayesva, Executive Director

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& Board Development Committee Chair