



**TORRES MARTINEZ DESERT CAHUILLA INDIANS**

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May 8, 2023

The Honorable Steve Padilla  
1021 O Street, Suite 6640  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 583 (Padilla) Salton Sea Conservancy/Request for Delay and Deliberative Engagement.**

Dear Senator Padilla:

I am writing to respectfully raise strong objection to SB 583, which proposes to alter the governance of the Salton Sea Management Program by shifting planning away from local entities that have the knowledge and expertise to restore the Salton Sea. As the Chairman for the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla and a member of the Salton Sea Authority, I respectfully request that you work with the Tribal Nations and the Salton Sea Authority to discuss the purpose of SB 583.

Strengthening cooperation and consultation between the state and Tribal Governments at the Salton Sea has long been a priority of Governor Newsom and I am concerned that this bill would undermine the proven successful partnership between Tribal Governments and the state to deliver state-funded projects at the Sea, and potentially sidestep the local priorities of the Salton Sea Authority and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla.

The Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla, a federally recognized tribe, has land use authority and Tribal Member residents that are directly impacted by the Salton Sea. Unfortunately, we were not aware of the intent to craft a new governance structure for the Salton Sea through this proposed legislation. With only weeks of legislative

session remaining, I am concerned that we don't have sufficient time to vet this proposal with the public.

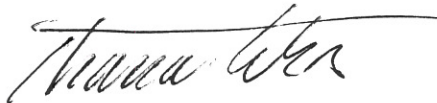
Major concerns with SB 583 include:

- Undefined definitions on who would be part of the "Salton Sea Conservancy Board";
- Unclear how the new "Director" would work with the current California Natural Resources Agency Assistant Secretary on Salton Sea;
- A "Conservancy" empowered to run all the Salton Sea projects may conflict with Riverside and Imperial County Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts which would be financed with county resources requiring county oversight.

Our Tribal Governments and local communities are dedicated to developing solutions for the Salton Sea that are created from thoughtful, inclusive, open, and transparent government. I appreciate the opportunity to strongly Oppose SB 583. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Thomas Torte, Jr.

Tribal Council Chairman

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