

13 June 2017

We the O’odham Hemajkam Ha-Je:nikida S-cukshon Am, **the O’odham People’s Independent Council of Tucson** (hereafter referred to as OPICT), come before you today to be recognized and heard as an autonomous council.

Firstly, let it be known to all present that we consider all lands at the base of ‘A’ Mountain, including those designated for the Rio Nuevo / Westside Development Project (hereafter referred to as RN/WDP) to be the sole property of the O’odham people. To substantiate this claim we site the following: Aboriginal Title; Ancestral Homelands; Unceded Territories; and Illegally Purchased Lands—all of which apply to the lands in question—as well as our own highest spiritual and cultural law, called *himdag* in the O’odham language. Furthermore, we claim exclusively as the O’odham people’s: all “intellectual,” “spiritual,” and “cultural” property rights, including the O’odham names: “S-cukshon,” “Tucson,” (a mispronunciation of S-cukshon, which means “at the base of the black (or ‘A’) mountain)—after which our city is named), and “The Birthplace of Tucson,” one of the slogans being used to sell the WDP/RN to the public.

As bona-fide owners of these lands—or *jewed* in O’odham—according to our *himdag* we hereby voice the following concerns and demands, to be considered in a negotiation process with the City of Tucson as of today:

1. **Return of the 7.7 acre parcel** designated on official RN/WDP maps as “S-cuk Shon,” signed, sealed and delivered to the O’odham Tribe, to be caretaken according to our *himdag*; upon which a cultural center shall be provided for the education of O’odham and non-O’odham visitors alike; while co-existing in respect for all immediate neighbors to that site;

2. **Environmental revitalization and habitat restoration** of the lands in question, with indigenous plants including mesquite, palo verde, agave, creosote, etc. which will most likely grow on the present soil despite any methane leakage;
3. **Signage in 3 languages throughout** the areas under discussion—in English, Spanish, and O’odham (we will provide translators) on any and all signage which is placed there; in order to identify and bring awareness to the presence and rights of the original inhabitants and owners of this land.

We look forward to working closely with you on these proposals and projects in the near future so that working together as diverse communities we can realize the most sustainable use of and respect for the S-cukshon lands for all.

Sincerely,

[document signed by]

David Garcia, former T.O. Nation Tribal Council member, Tucson resident;

Dennis Manuel, Ñu:kudam (protector) of Waw Giwulk (Bababoquivari), member of O’odham Nation, Tucson resident;

Danny Running Bear, OPICT representative, Tucson Resident (Menlo Park / S-cukshon neighborhood)