



# FAIHP

Fresno American Indian Health Project



April 5, 2021

R. C. Rain Tree  
(559) 213-5654  
renamesquawvalley@gmail.com  
Change.org: <http://chng.it/mPTvX8B8>  
Facebook: Rename Squaw Valley, Fresno County

**RE: Letter of Support for Renaming “Squaw” Valley**

Dear Mr. Rain Tree,

Thank you for your request for a letter of support for the renaming of “Squaw Valley”. Your request was presented to the Board of Directors on March 23, 2021 as an agenda item for review and discussion.

Upon review of your request, Fresno American Indian Health Project is interested in supporting the renaming of Squaw Valley. We agree that the word “Squaw” is inappropriate, culturally insensitive and degrading of Native American Indian Women. However, we prefer to refrain from a) endorsing the suggestions for name change and b) putting forth any suggested names that may or should be used to replace the “Squaw Valley” name.

At this time, we offer the suggestion to involve the indigenous members of the community within said geographic area (Squaw Valley) and encourage you to reach out to them for input and feedback through a community collaborative process to identify an alternative name.

Please see attached Letter of Support from our organization for retitling Squaw Valley to a different name.

Sincerely,

Pamela Bowling-Coronado  
FAIHP Board Chairperson



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**RE: Letter of Support for Renaming “Squaw” Valley**

Dear Board of Supervisors,

The Fresno American Indian Health Project is a long standing Urban Indian Organization, serving American Indian Alaska Native individuals and their families from Fresno County and surrounding areas. We support all efforts to make right wrongs within the national, state and local history of America. Like many other culturally inappropriate and culturally insensitive acts and actions, the use of the word "squaw" is a derogatory term and disrespectful to women. Although *the word* may have originated from an Algonquian word meaning "Female" or a Mohawk word meaning "Vagina", languages change and evolve. These tribal languages are from the Great Lakes and New York areas and not from the Central part of California. Over the years, *the word* has been used to exemplify a woman of ill repute, female genitalia, an inferior wife or woman, and pictures often depict a sexually graphic Native woman.

While we recognize the harmful impacts that terms like "squaw" have on Native American women and girls, and that upholding their use only perpetuate disrespectful views and actions towards Native Americans, and we do see name change as a positive step to community building and wellness, we must also abide by cultural protocol and defer to the tribe of the geographic area to present an actual name.

Therefore, we support the general efforts across the US and locally to eradicate race-based derogatory terms, names, and images, etc. that perpetuate Native American stereotypes, we must rely on the actual tribes whose homelands are the region currently termed Squaw Valley for a replacement name.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. Please contact our CEO, Selina De La Peña with any questions at 559.320.0490 or [sdelapena@faihp.org](mailto:sdelapena@faihp.org).

Sincerely,

Pamela Bowling-Coronado  
FAIHP Board Chairperson