QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE
Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation

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Statement from the Quechan Tribal Council on Supervisor John Hawk's Remarks and Community Bridge Access

The Ft. Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe has seen the public footage of Supervisor John Hawk's remarks in response to about 75 community members who came to raise serious concerns about the bridge closures cutting off our community. We thank our allies who brought this to our attention. Public footage like this lets every constituent see how officials respond when the cameras are rolling and the stakes are real.

Our Nation does not endorse or oppose candidates. This is not about party or the November election. It is about the conduct of a sitting official toward the people he was elected to serve.

Egregious remarks of this kind rely on racial stereotypes about Native people. The Quechan Nation will not tolerate them from anyone, least of all an elected representative. Our people have lived along the Colorado River since time immemorial. We are not a punchline. We are neighbors, taxpayers, employers, voters, and a sovereign Nation.

Residents came seeking resolution and answers to an emergency issue. They came because the Picacho Road Bridge has been closed since March 2025, and the detour now runs over the Arnold Road Bridge, which this Board itself declared an emergency. Families, elders, school buses, patients reaching the Fort Yuma Health Care Center, and emergency responders depend on these routes every day. Supervisor Hawk said himself, "If we lose that bridge, that is a major problem." We agree. Our citizens deserved a serious answer.

Supervisor Hawk has spoken of being a "good neighbor" and of setting differences aside to work together. We ask him to live up to those words. Specifically, we ask for:

1. **A public apology**, delivered in person to the Quechan Tribal Council and stated on the record at a regular Board of Supervisors meeting.
2. **A written timeline**, within 30 days, for the Picacho Road Bridge replacement and Arnold Road Bridge repairs, including funding secured, anticipated construction

start dates, and completion or reopening dates. We also ask the County to identify remaining funding gaps, additional funding sources available, and opportunities for the Quechan Nation to partner with the County in pursuing and applying for those funds.

3. **An emergency-access plan,** developed with Quechan Tribal Police, Fire, and Health, in case the Arnold Road Bridge fails.
4. **Regular public updates in Winterhaven** until both bridges are fully restored.
5. **A government-to-government meeting** with the Tribal Council on these issues and on matters affecting our homelands, including our work to Protect Kw'tsán.

This Board has shown before that it can hear Quechan voices and respect our sovereignty. We expect that same respect now. Our citizens and families in District 5 are paying close attention to how seriously this concern is taken. We hope to see words matched by action.

Best regards,

Joathan E. Koteen

President, Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe