
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2507 (Nguyen) - Office of Tribal Affairs

Version: February 20, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: G.O. 14 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 2507 renames the Office of the Governor's Tribal Advisor to the Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) and expands its responsibilities for facilitating state agencies' engagement with tribal governments. AB 2507 also requires state agencies to adopt tribal consultation policies and designate dedicated liaisons, as specified.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown, potentially significant costs for state agencies to designate tribal liaisons and adopt consultation policies (General Fund and various special funds). Actual costs will range from absorbable to the low hundreds of thousands of dollars per entity, depending on whether an agency has already implemented these requirements. (See Staff Comments for additional detail.)
- Unknown cost pressures for the OTA to review and support the implementation of state agencies' tribal consultation policies, to the extent additional staff time or resources are required to meet the office's expanded responsibilities.
- Unknown costs to support the Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC), including travel and other necessary expenses for conducting meetings and providing recommendations to the OTA and state agencies (General Fund).

Background: On September 19, 2011, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-10-11, which established the Office of the Governor's Tribal Advisor to oversee and implement effective government-to-government consultation between the Administration and Tribes on policies that affect California tribal communities. The Office of the Tribal Advisor was formally placed in statute by AB 880 (Gray, Chapter 801, Statutes of 2018).

On June 18, 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-15-19, which acknowledges and apologizes on behalf of the state for the historical "violence, exploitation, dispossession and the attempted destruction of tribal communities" which dislocated California Native Americans from their ancestral land and sacred practices and established the California Truth and Healing Council. In addition, Executive Order N-15-19 reaffirms and incorporates by reference the principles of government-to-government engagements.

In 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 923 (Ramos, Chapter 475, Statutes of 2022) which encourages the state and its agencies to consult on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized and, as specified, with nonfederally recognized tribes, in order to allow tribal officials the opportunity to provide meaningful input in the development of policies, processes, programs, and projects that have tribal implications.

Proposed Law:

- Renames the Office of the Governor's Tribal Advisor to the OTA, to be headed by the Secretary of Tribal Affairs.
- Requires the Secretary of Tribal Affairs to serve as the Governor's principal advisor on tribal affairs and facilitate, to the extent feasible, government-to-government engagement between tribal governments and state agencies.
- Requires the OTA to do all of the following:
 - Support the implementation of consultation policies and facilitate direct engagement between state agencies and tribal governments.
 - Provide training, guidance, and assistance to tribal liaisons and state agency personnel to promote consistent, culturally informed, and effective government-to-government engagement practices.
 - Improve cross-agency communication and coordination to ensure consistent approaches to tribal matters.
 - Keep tribal governments informed of state-level policy developments.
 - Track whether state agencies have established or updated consultation policies and employed or designated tribal liaisons consistent with the provisions of this bill.
 - Maintain an online, publicly accessible and up-to-date tribal liaison contact list for all state agencies, and a publicly accessible and up-to-date list of adopted tribal consultation policies.
- Requires each state agency that engages, or has services affecting tribal governments to do all of the following:
 - Designate a tribal liaison, place the position within the executive office, and require the position to report directly to the chief executive of the agency.
 - Ensure the position serves as the primary contact for tribal governments.
 - Notify the office within 30 days of a vacancy, appointment, or replacement of a tribal liaison.
 - Adopt a tribal consultation policy, as specified.
- Requires the OTA to be advised by a TAC consisting of nine tribal chair members, with three nominated by tribes in the northern region, three in the central region, and three in the southern region, as specified.
- Requires the TAC to provide guidance, recommendations, and tribal perspectives to assist the OTA in strengthening government-to-government engagement and

improving the design, access, and implementation of state programs and services affecting tribal governments.

- Provides that the TAC shall not supplant formal consultation processes or exercise approval authority over state agency actions.
- Requires the OTA, in conjunction with the TAC, to do all of the following:
 - Review and recommend improvements to the consultation policies and practices of state agencies.
 - Identify barriers that limit tribal governments' ability to access, participate, or benefit from state programs.
 - Recommend statewide strategies to advance shared state and tribal goals.
 - Develop guidance for state agencies on effective tribal engagement, as specified.
 - Identify cross agency issues that affect tribal governments and recommend coordinated approaches to improve efficiency.
 - Provide recommendations on the appropriate responsibilities, authority, qualifications, and expectations for tribal liaisons and tribal policy advisors.
- States legislative findings and declarations.

Staff Comments: Costs for impacted agencies will vary according to their existing tribal consultation policies and whether they have a designated tribal liaison. For comparison:

- The Commission for Behavioral Health estimates costs of \$135,000 in FY 2026-27 and \$270,000 annually ongoing to establish a tribal liaison position (Behavioral Health Services Fund).
- The California State Library (CSL) estimates ongoing costs of \$165,000, as it does not have an existing position that can be repurposed or reassigned to serve as a tribal liaison (General Fund). While CSL received permanent position authority for 1.0 Library Programs Consultant in FY 2024-25, this position is supported solely by federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and cannot absorb the duties specified in this bill.
- The Department of Social Services estimates ongoing costs of \$220,000 to fund one position to act as a tribal policy advisor and coordinate tribal engagement for its programs (General Fund).
- The California Energy Commission estimates ongoing costs of \$179,000 for a new permanent personnel year (PY) (General Fund).
- The Department of Real Estate (DRE) estimates a one-time cost of \$30,000 to develop its tribal consultation policy (Real Estate Fund). DRE notes that it already

has an established tribal liaison reporting to the Chief Deputy Director. Given its limited interactions with local and interstate governments, DRE anticipates a low volume of outreach and expects existing staff to absorb the bill's ongoing workload.

- The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) estimates ongoing costs of \$180,000 for 1.0 PY to update policies to align with new statewide standards and provide meaningful consultation.
- The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, California Department of Insurance, California Department of Public Health, Department of General Services, Department of Justice, Office of Emergency Services, and Department of State Hospitals anticipate costs to be absorbable. Staff notes this estimate assumes the bill does not explicitly mandate the creation of a new position to fulfill the tribal liaison designation.

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