



SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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Statement Regarding Public Use of Sacred Ceremonies

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe (*Tribe*) is aware of a video and social media posts recently circulated by Congressional District Three candidate Hope Schepelman, following a sweat ceremony held on the Southern Ute Reservation. The video and accompanying post inaccurately suggested that the Tribe had issued an invitation to the ceremony and have since been used as campaign material, further misrepresenting the nature of the event and the Tribe's involvement.

Sweat ceremonies hold deep spiritual and cultural significance for our people. They are sacred spaces of healing, reflection, and renewal. While certain ceremonies may be open to the broader community, we ask that all visitors approach them with reverence, honoring the traditions and protocols that guide these sacred practices.

The Tribe reaffirms its unwavering commitment to authentic, respectful, and government-to-government consultation—a process rooted in our sovereignty, cultural integrity, and the protocols of our duly authorized leadership. Any engagement that does not follow these formal channels is not recognized as legitimate or representative of the Tribe.

We respectfully clarify that the perspectives or invitations extended by individual Tribal Members do not represent the official views or position of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. The Tribe strongly condemns the exploitation and tokenization of our people, culture, language, and sacred ceremonies for personal or political purposes. These actions are not only misleading, they are deeply disrespectful and will not be tolerated.

We call on all individuals and organizations seeking to engage with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to do so in good faith, through appropriate and respectful channels, and with a full understanding of and respect for our sovereign status and the dignity of our people. Candidates who are running for office and wish to seek support or meet with Tribal Council should directly contact the Office of the Chairman at 970-563-2319.