

Sacred Land Film Project

David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Suite 440, Berkeley, CA 94704

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StandingOnSacredGround.org



A project of
Earth Island Institute

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Board of Supervisors
70 West Hedding Street, East Wing, 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

VIA EMAIL: BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in strong opposition to the proposed Sargent Quarry Project that would harm 320 acres of Amah Mutsun traditional lands and destroy the sacred site known as Juristac. According to tribal chairman Valentin Lopez, "To the Amah Mutsun, Juristac is as holy as Jerusalem." The mine would also cause significant damage to the area's water, wildlife, plant and other natural resources.

This land was historically home to Ohlone villages and burial sites dating back 15,000 years. It was the site for sacred tribal dances and ceremonies for millennia prior to the arrival of Spanish settlers. As with most Native American tribes, the newcomers forced the Amah Mutsun to disband and renounce their culture. The few hundred tribal members who resettled in the area were wiped out by a smallpox epidemic in 1862.

The Amah Mutsun have not had access to their "Jerusalem" and the quarry would foreclose their ability to reaffirm their culture and religious traditions on the site forever by destroying its environmental, religious, cultural, spiritual and traditional value.

The world is finally recognizing the injustice imposed on indigenous people worldwide. At the 2016 World Conservation Congress, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) passed Motion 26 which declares that all indigenous peoples' sacred natural sites and protected areas should be "No-Go Areas" for destructive industrial and extractive activities such as mining, dam-building and logging. Motion 26 urges governments to "respect all categories of IUCN protected areas as No-Go Areas for environmentally damaging industrial-scale activities and infrastructure development" and calls on businesses to "withdraw from exploration or activities in these areas, and not to conduct future activities in protected areas."

The State of California has long infringed on the rights of the state's indigenous peoples, stealing their lands, destroying their sacred sites, undermining their cultures and financing genocidal campaigns of murder. It is time to finally

recognize this history, put a stop to this unacceptable behavior and respect the state's first residents. The very survival of the Amah Mutsun culture is at stake.

We strongly urge the Board not to approve the Sargent Quarry Project and to negotiate with the Amah Mutsun people on a government-to-government basis on any future projects that might affect their ancestral lands and sacred sites.

If and when a scoping hearing is held on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this destructive project, I request notification, as I would like to make a statement as to the scope and impact, culturally and environmentally, of this project, and the context in which it should be assessed and evaluated.

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher McLeod". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Christopher McLeod
Director