

February 8, 2021

Dear Santa Clara County Officials,

On behalf of The Red Nation, an international organization of Native and non-Native activists, educators, students, and community members, we are writing to you in support of the Amah Mutsun people and the preservation of their sacred site, Juristac. We are unequivocally opposed to the proposed Sargent Ranch Quarry mining project at Juristac and ask you to please consider this moment in human history, a moment in which Santa Clara County's people and ecosystems need more protection than ever. **We urge you to protect Amah Mutsun cultural and ecological integrity by rejecting the proposed Sargent Quarry Project.**

Protection is simply about being a good relative and supporting the Amah Mutsun in pursuing their sovereign right to self determination. In this case, protection also ensures that the Amah Mutsun people will have a future. Through they're own organizing, and with the support of dozens of cities, institutions and organizations, comprising thousands of people, the Amah Mutsun people have proposed to turn the Juristac site into a tribal park. A healthy, more sustainable alternative that will center people, the environment, and ultimately contribute to making the region more climate resilient.

It is a well known fact that the surrounding areas have been ravaged by wildfires over the last few years. To the Amah Mutsun, fire is a gift given to us by the Creator and in addition to using fire for light, cooking, warmth and ceremonies, the Amah Mutsun use fire as a way to manage landscapes, ensuring that destructive wildfires don't come back to the area. They are renowned for using fire to manage forests to protect against wildfires - they've even [trained the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection \(Cal Fire\)](#).

The long history of the Amah Mutsun people stewarding the land and protecting our ecosystems is part of a larger, global trend of indigenous people advocating for and defending our natural resources so that future generations can thrive. [Research](#) has shown that despite being less than 5% of the world's population, Indigenous peoples protect 80% of global biodiversity. Thus, as the original caretakers of Juristac, the Amah Mutsun people are best positioned to maintain ecological balance of this area for everyone's benefit.

Permitting an open pit mine on a sacred cultural heritage site would irreversibly damage both the land and the people. This mine is the epitome of a bad deal. Santa Clara County already has dwindling open spaces and permitting an open pit mine would severely limit any chance for Santa Clara County's people to recreate and breathe fresh air at Juristac. Additionally, the future of construction and sustainable materials is going to be more green and eco-conscious. Open pit mines are an industry of the past that show minimal returns on investment and are public relations nightmares. Besides this, Santa Clara County values diversity and equity. Why bet on resource extraction when we could invest in equity and long term co-benefits of healthy communities?

We support the Amah Mutsun's right to live peacefully and hold ceremonies in their ancestral homeland, as they have done for thousands of generations. Native nations continue to thrive despite successive waves of settler colonialism by Spain, Mexico, and the U.S. These brutal regimes enforce oppression, enslavement, betrayal, and genocide - from the Mission Era to the Gold Rush, through the 1950's and into the present. Ongoing settler colonization leads to land dispossession, incarceration, and premature death for Native communities. As our officials

today, we hope you will use your power to make decisions that support healthy land and livelihoods for the Amah Mutsun, and all of us.

We do not blame you or the Debt Acquisition Company of America LLC's role in carving out this 320 acres of land for a project of such destructive nature. We are asking for you to be responsible for the impact of these decisions on our futures. We ask you to listen very carefully to the testimony of the Amah Mutsun and what is at stake for their culture and way of life. We call on you to uphold the rights of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to maintain and protect their religious and cultural sites as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Right of the Indigenous Peoples. Preserving Juristac is a necessary and significant step in addressing the historical and continuing dispossession and destruction of the Native tribes of Santa Clara County.

The road towards reparations for the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band is long. This is an opportunity for Santa Clara County leadership to stand with not only its Indigenous citizens, but with any citizen who hopes for a more sustainable future, a future that next generations will be proud of. **By protecting Juristac and rejecting the proposed Sargent Quarry Project**, you have the power to begin this necessary journey towards justice for all people.

Sincerely,
The Red Nation - California Freedom Council