

Regeneración/Regeneration

PÁJARO VALLEY CLIMATE ACTION



For Immediate Attention March 23, 2022: No Quarry on Mutsun Sacred Grounds

Dear Santa Clara County Board Supervisors and Planning Commission Members:

Advisory Board

Mayra Bernabe

Organizer, COPA (Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action)

Adam Bolaños Scow

Senior Strategist, Public Water Now

Anne Hayes

Director of Development, Western Region, Climate Central

Kirsten Liske,

Vice President of Community Programs, Ecology Action

Nelly Vaquera-Boggs

President, Pájaro Valley Federation of Teachers

Regeneracion - Pajaro Valley Climate Action is a non-profit organization formed in 2016 with a vision of a Pajaro Valley community that has achieved climate justice so that everyone can live in harmony with the natural world. We write to you understanding that we share the important Pajaro Valley watershed, our local ecosystem and a history of environmental stewardship that preceded and transcends any current political boundaries.

We write this letter to urge you to reject the permits for the proposed Sargent Quarry Project and to protect the land between San Juan Bautista and Gilroy known to the local indigenous Amah Mutsun Tribal Band as Juristac.

We stand together with Mutsun Ohlone community members in opposition to the proposed mine on their sacred land. We listen to the words of Amah Mutsun Tribal Band member Ed Ketchum, who said, *“The whole area around Juristac is a power place. Long ago, the people all jointly agreed that this was an area that had power. This is where our ancestors held healing ceremonies, this is where our spiritual doctors went...to prepare themselves for the dances.”*

We write to you because of the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions, to invest in regenerative climate action. If approved, the proposed mine would extract non-renewable resources, sand and gravel, and result in increased greenhouse gas production. There is also an indirect impact related to the production of concrete. For each ton of cement, an average of 0.9 tons of carbon dioxide are produced. Emissions from cement production account for a significant amount of total greenhouse gas emissions. Approving the mine would continue the exploitation of land and resources that has led us to our current existential climate crisis.

The extraction and transportation of resources over long distances also cause harmful impacts on the environment. The land on which the mine is proposed is an open space area of unique regional value as recognized by regional conservation organizations including the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority. The proposed mine would threaten this critical wildlife corridor linking the Santa Cruz Mountains, Gabilan Mountains, and Diablo Range, supporting healthy populations of diverse plants and animals in the greenbelt of our base in Watsonville and beyond. We must listen to and respect the ancient wisdom and leadership of Indigenous people working to heal from exploitative and discriminatory relationships, to preserve traditional ecological knowledge and the land itself for generations to come. We commend the work the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band has



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been doing around local stewardship and revitalizing proven strategies for ensuring a resilient, diverse and bountiful natural environment.

The proposed mine would negatively impact the Pajaro River watershed, which includes the counties of Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz and Monterey, changing the water flows and challenging flood regulation. It would increase the threats of extreme events like flood, drought and storm surge.

15 years ago, the non-profit organization *American Rivers* listed the Pajaro River as the most endangered river in the United States, stating that “70 years of extensive sand and gravel mining in upstream tributaries has degraded the riverbed, causing millions of cubic yards of sediment to be carried downstream, changing the river’s hydrology, sullyng water quality, and harming wild-life...[this mining] has also substantially increased peak flood flows, adding to the risk of flooding downstream.” Strides have been made in healing this critical water source; we must not repeat dangerous and harmful practices of the past; we must make better decisions today.

Finally, we call on you to reject this proposed mine in the name of environmental justice, which requires that industrial development projects such as the Sargent Quarry be evaluated in light of their environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts on communities that have historically been the most impacted by environmental degradation.

Please make the only responsible decision - deny approval of permits for the proposed Sargent Ranch Quarry Project.

Sincerely,

Nancy Faulstich, Director

Natalie Olivas, Organizer

Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action
& Regeneración’s Advocacy Committee