



January 19, 2023

To Santa Clara County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors:

We in Novasutras strongly support efforts led by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to protect the sacred land they know as Juristac. We are motivated by our deep respect for all life. We honor the world's many spiritual traditions that recognize the sacred rights of all beings to have an opportunity to thrive. We celebrate all who work to protect, preserve and restore the living world.

Novasutras is an ecospiritual and ecoactivist organization, conceived in the Santa Cruz area on the unceded lands of Awaswas-speaking peoples, and established online in 2017. In Novasutras, we enact change through ecospiritual community. We reawaken our deepest connection with our living world to reclaim our joy, honor our pain, grow trusted relationships, and take meaningful action in service to all life.

Novasutras members feel it is vital to support the Amah Mutsun in protecting their ceremonial land. It is clear that any mining operation developed at Juristac would cause irrevocable ecological, cultural and spiritual harm to this sacred landscape. This would be a tremendous injustice to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, and to the numerous nonhuman inhabitants of the ecosystems in and around Juristac.

We clearly recognize the spiritual significance of the Juristac Tribal Cultural Landscape to the Amah Mutsun, whose ancestors experienced so much suffering, and who should not be subjected to thirty more years of spiritual violence during the construction and operation of a quarry on this site. The Landscape would suffer significant and unavoidable impacts were the proposed mining project and related development allowed. We hold in our hearts the vision that this site will someday be returned to the care of those whose ancestors honored it through ceremony, that they may re-establish and enact the healing of this vital spiritual connection to place.

The proposed construction and operations of any such project would also lead to unavoidable impacts on countless members of the more-than-human community of life. If preserved and allowed to recover, the sacred site of Juristac functions as a critical wildlife movement corridor, protecting the health and genetic diversity of species like the mountain lions, who range across the Santa Cruz, Gabilan and Diablo Mountains. The increased traffic, noise, and light pollution from quarry activities would have profound effects not only on these large mobile animals, but



on an abundance of smaller beings who live in the streams, grasslands, wetlands, chaparral, and woodlands of Juristac. The pollution of the water and air from quarry activities would be disruptive to nearby beings for many years after operations would cease. We urge the protection of Juristac on behalf of the California Tiger Salamanders, the Great Egrets, the Congdon's Tarplant, the Steelheads, the California Red-Legged Frogs, the Western Pond Turtles, the American Badgers, the Burrowing Owls, the Pallid Bats, the Michael's Rein Orchid, the Gray Foxes, the Snowy Egrets, the San Francisco Dusky-footed Woodrats, the Western Red Bats, the Pacific Treefrogs, the Striped Skunks, the Bobcats, the Great Blue Herons, the Santa Clara Red Ribbons, and so many other plant, animal and fungal beings whose opportunities to thrive would be reduced or curtailed if this landscape were so desecrated.

Disruption of the sacred land of Juristac would have farther-reaching implications. It would be a further expansion of exploitative practices that contribute to climate destabilization, adding to greenhouse gas emissions. It would be a continuation of harmful settler colonialism that ignores traditional wisdom and the rights of indigenous peoples. It would take us farther down the path of biodiversity loss and the mass extinction of species, unraveling complex ecosystem relationships that sustain all of us, humans and nonhumans together, with opportunities to thrive and evolve.

We commit to assisting the Amah Mutsun in their efforts to protect Juristac. We stand with them in rejecting any harmful development at the site. We created an online campaign that helped to get about 1,300 letters of concern delivered to the Santa Clara County Planning Commission between August and November 2022 in response to the draft Environmental Impact Report. We will continue to promote and seek ways to further support any actions or demonstrations that the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band undertake or endorse to protect the sacred land of Juristac.

*Signed:*

Michelle Y. Merrill, Ph.D., Novasutras founder

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