



ARBORETUM

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064

September 12, 2017

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

Dear County Board of Supervisors,

We, the undersigned, write to express our concern over the proposed development of the Sargent Quarry Project in the area now known as Sargent Ranch. Prior to Euro-American contact this place was known as *Juristac*, and was a significant site of cultural and spiritual importance to the ancestors of the present-day Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. *Juristac* retains that cultural and spiritual significance to the Amah Mutsun today. Collectively, we are botanists, ecologists, ethnobotanists, and horticulturalists with expertise in California native plants, traditional ecological knowledge, conservation, and land management. We strongly urge you and the developers to reconsider the proposed extractive sand and gravel mining operation and to enter into government-to-government consultation with the Amah Mutsun to ensure that this irreplaceable location is preserved.

The proposed development of 320 acres of the present-day Sargent Ranch property into an extractive sand and gravel mining operation will likely destroy *Juristac*, a sacred place that is integral to the history and traditions of the Amah Mutsun. *Juristac* was the site – and in fact, the only site – of the Big Head Dance, perhaps the most significant ceremony of the Mutsun. Despite the lack of access, the Amah Mutsun continue to have a relationship with and responsibilities to *Juristac*. The seriousness to care for their homelands has been demonstrated in their cooperative agreements throughout the county with agencies such as California State Parks and the Bureau of Land Management, and serves as a model that could be used in this instance. The proposed project will likely have a detrimental impact on the local environment, including water quality, wildlife, and plant communities that make up the cultural landscape and livelihood that supported the Amah Mutsun people and their ancestors. In addition to these adverse impacts, we urge you to consider that there are very few places remaining within the ancestral lands of the Amah Mutsun that still provide such powerful visible and tangible testimony to the persistence of Amah Mutsun culture on the Central Coast.

As a sacred place of memory and learning for present-day and future generations of Amah Mutsun people, should *Juristac* be destroyed, a long history of resilience, cultural sustenance, and responsibility will end. It is more than the physical remains that archaeologists find that determine the eligibility for the inclusion of the location on the state or national register of historic places. AB52 and SB18 strengthen the need for tribes to provide their knowledge and history beyond anthropology as only a fragment of this knowledge was told and preserved given the ongoing historic trauma and denial of their value as people with thousands of years of ties to this land.

It is for these reasons that we urge you to follow both ethical and legal mandates and work directly and collaboratively with the Amah Mutsun to find ways to preserve *Jursitac* and provide avenues for them to access and care for this most sacred site, both now and into the future.



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If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact any of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Quigley".

Martin Quigley, Ph.D.
Executive Director,
UCSC Arboretum
Adjunct Professor,
Environmental Studies Department

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Hall".

Brett Hall
Director, Native Plant Program
UCSC Arboretum

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Flores".

Rick Flores, MA
Curator, California Native Plant Collection
UCSC Arboretum