



LEAP - Facilitating projects, partnerships & exchanges that provoke ecologically sustainable co-existence

10 October 2017

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Board of Supervisors
70 West Hedding Street, East Wing, 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110
Email address: Board Operations@cob.sccgov.org

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Amah Mutsun and their religious and indigenous peoples rights as granted under the constitution of the United States of America. My concern is in regards to proposed surface mining at the Amah Mutsun's most sacred site, Juristac. Should the Sargent Quarry Project go ahead, it will deny the Amah Mutsun the ability to fully participate in their religious rights to hold prayer and ceremony on their most sacred site. The Santa Clara County must not sacrifice Juristac.

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band chairperson Mr Valentin Lopez had at last year's International Heart of Borneo Conference held in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo, shared the deep history of the Amah Mutsun with participants who included leaders of indigenous people, civil society, government, diplomatic and business communities from Malaysia and the region. He spoke about their survival and identity which can only happen if they can restore ancestral cultural, environmental and spiritual relations to the land and most importantly to their sacred sites. The Amah Mutsun story resonated with those present, leaving a deep impact on those who had the privilege to hear Mr Lopez speak. Like all indigenous people worldwide, the Amah Mutsun have the right to identify their sacred and religious sites regardless, especially where verifying documentation exists.

I ask for the Santa Clara County to adopt and honor the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the United States has lent its support to. This declaration requires governments to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent from indigenous peoples before embarking on any development project that would affect their territory. The approval of this project will prevent the Amah Mutsun from ever again returning to their most sacred site. Access to Juristac by the Amah Mutsun should be fundamental, and in this case, it is not.

I stand in solidarity with the Amah Mustun. I am asking for the Santa Clara County to respect the Amah Mutsun and their rights, and to not approve or proceed with this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Cynthia Ong".

Cynthia Ong, Executive Chairperson