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Peace and Justice Working Group of San Jose Presbytery

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Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

Santa Clara County Planning Commission | planning.commission@pln.sccgov.org

Cc: info@protectjuristac.org

Re: Opposition to the Sargent Quarry Project on the Sargent Ranch Parcel

Supervisor Mike Wasserman, District 1

Supervisor Cindy Chavez, District 2

Supervisor Otto Lee, District 3

Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, District 4

Supervisor Joe Simitian, District 5

January 20, 2022

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Santa Clara County Planning Commission:

We are writing to express serious concerns about the Sargent Quarry Project which is proposed for land that is known as Juristac and sacred to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. For the reasons outlined below, we respectfully request that you reject this proposal.

This project — a 320-acre open pit sand and gravel project — is proposed on land sacred to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, important to unique animal life and their migration pattern, and vital to our sparse California water supply. The proposed project threatens the cultural and spiritual integrity of the sacred site known as Juristac. It would be a desecration of this site, both ecologically and spiritually, should it be destroyed for an open-pit mine. Spiritual ceremonies and dances have been conducted in this area for millennia and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band hold this site sacred for their cultural and spiritual expression. As a faith family, The Peace and Justice Working Group of San Jose Presbytery stands in solidarity with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band in requesting that this project be rejected.

As Presbyterians and people of faith, we understand that we are all stewards of Creation and affirm and uphold the principle of the interconnected web of life. We understand that we have a moral and spiritual responsibility to stand up for justice. Our faith teaches us to protect God's people by being good stewards of the land, being faithful carers of sanctuaries and sacred places, and by naming our respect and dignity for God's people, especially those marginalized in long-threatened cultures. Our Presbytery, which is composed of 30+ congregations, recently voted to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, naming and confessing our complicity in colonizing and oppressing our native indigenous siblings. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band have a long and successful history of caring for the land with ecological sustenance as a priority. Their land management methods protected and preserved critical ecological habitat for thousands of years. The proposed gravel mine would disrupt a critical passageway for wildlife migration and would permanently break a critical element in the Juristac ecosystem causing a multitude of negative impacts by doing so. Knowing that we have a stewardly responsibility to aid in this protection and that our future generations of faith will benefit from preserving this land and its important ecosystems, critical wildlife corridors, and the federally-listed threatened species that make their home there, we vehemently support preserving Juristac and returning it to the care of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band.

As people of faith, we uphold and live out the principles of the inherent worth and dignity of every person. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band is advocating for preserving their sacred site which is so very integral to sustaining their sacred cultural heritage. Would you consider approving this project over one of our churches in San Jose Presbytery, against the wishes of that congregation? We think not. The Peace and Justice Working Group of San Jose Presbytery stands in solidarity with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and encourages you to reject the application for this project. Instead, we make a plea to protect and preserve Juristac, their sacred site, and recognize that Amah Mutsun spirituality is worthy of the same sacred respect offered to other religious and spiritual spaces in our county.

Sincerely,

Ruling Elder Meredith Hurley, Chair

Addie Domske, Peacemaking Advocate

on behalf of the Peace and Justice Working Group of San Jose Presbytery (Presbyterian Church (USA))