



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: April 25, 2023

CATEGORY: Consent

DEPT.: City Manager's Office

TITLE: **Adopt a Resolution in Support of the Efforts of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to Preserve Sargent Ranch/Juristac as Open Space**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View in Support of the Efforts of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to Preserve Sargent Ranch/Juristac as Open Space, to be read in title only, further reading waived (Attachment 1 to the Council report).

BACKGROUND

The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Ohlone/Costanoan (Amah Mutsun Tribal Band) Indians of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco Counties and Green Foothills are seeking support to protect a segment of ancestral lands of the Ahmah Mutsun people known as Juristac (*Huris-tak*) from the development of a gravel and sand mining operation. Green Foothills has requested that the City Council adopt a resolution calling for the permanent protection of the sacred landscape known as Juristac, and for the County of Santa Clara to reject the application for an open-pit sand and gravel mine on Juristac, known as the Sargent Ranch Quarry.

ANALYSIS

Juristac is a territory that covers the southern hills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, above the Pajaro and San Benito Rivers. This territory has been a spiritual ground where the Amah Mutsun people gather to heal as a community and to celebrate sacred ceremonies.

The current owner of 5,000+ acres of the Juristac landscape, the Southern California-based Debt Acquisition Company of America (DACA) proposes to develop a sand and gravel surface mining operation called the Sargent Ranch Quarry Project on an approximately 403-acre site. The proposed Sargent Quarry Project seeks to impact 320 acres of this land by developing a 14-acre processing plant, 200' open pit quarry site, a 1.6-mile-long conveyor belt, and a 30' wide access road.

In July 2022, Santa Clara County published its Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Sargent Ranch Quarry. The DEIR found 14 separate significant and unavoidable impacts from the mine, including impacts to tribal cultural resources, wildlife movement, air quality, transportation, and aesthetics (Attachment 2 to this Council report).

The DEIR recognized that the entirety of the Juristac landscape, not only specific archeological sites, is culturally important and would be damaged. The DEIR noted that the importance of the tribal cultural landscape is defined by its natural elements such as the hills, the creeks and rivers, the natural springs, and the views of the landscape. All of this would suffer “permanent and irreversible alterations” that no mitigation could avoid and no postmining reclamation could erase.

The www.protectjuristac.org website explains that for Amah Mutsun people, Juristac is central to ancestral heritage and the node of a cultural landscape that included settlements and sacred ceremonies for thousands of years. The location of the land in the southern foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains at the confluence of the Pajaro and San Benito Rivers, in addition to several creeks, was valued by the tribe for hunting, fishing, and as a gathering place. Physical remnants of cultural sites still exist in certain locations.

The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band has expressed urgent concerns about the project based on its location within lands of critical importance to the tribe and vehemently opposes the proposed mining project and seeks community support for the protection of the tribe’s sacred grounds.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts to the City in adopting this resolution.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not adopt a Resolution in Support of the Efforts of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to Preserve Sargent Ranch/Juristac as Open Space.
2. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting.

Prepared by:

Christina Gilmore
Assistant to the City Manager

Approved by:

Audrey Seymour Ramberg
Assistant City Manager

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- Attachments: 1. Resolution
 2. Sargent Ranch Quarry Draft Environmental Impact Report—July 2022