

SANTA YNEZ BAND OF CHUMASH INDIANS

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November 4, 2015

The Honorable Doreen Farr
County Supervisor
Santa Barbara County
105 East Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA, 93101

The Honorable Peter Adam
County Supervisor
Santa Barbara County
105 East Anapamu St
Santa Barbara, CA, 93101

Dear Supervisors Farr and Adam,

As our next scheduled meeting approaches, I am once again reiterating our request that the County negotiate an agreement with the tribe in good faith.

At the outset of this public meeting process, I was hopeful that the relationship between the Chumash Tribe and the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors had finally turned a page. The Tribe recently successfully completed cooperative agreements with the County Sheriff and Fire Department, and Chumash Tribal leadership strongly supported the intent our meetings—to discuss future land use plans, identify common areas of concern and to negotiate a mitigation agreement that offsets those potential impacts. We were hopeful, and believed that a mutually beneficial solution could be reached.

However, after reading your October 9th letter, and participating in the October 19th meeting, I am increasingly concerned that this process is designed to fail. Instead of addressing the substantive issues, and identifying the limited impacts of the construction of 143 houses and a community center, the County has allowed this process to devolve into yet another forum for the deeply misguided anti-tribal individuals to personally attack me, Vice Chairman Kahn, and the motives and goodwill of the Chumash Tribe.

I take particular issue with the assertion that circumstances have changed since the tribe submitted a proposed mitigation agreement to the County more than four years ago. Quite sadly, nothing has changed. Many of our tribal members and descendants still lack the ability to live on tribal lands. Of those who do live on our existing lands, the housing grows older and more out of date by the day and those homes still lack sufficient fire protection, endangering the health and safety of our community. Our proposed use of the land has not changed. And even our offer to mitigate perceived off reservation impacts has not changed, despite years of personal attacks and slander.

The County's refusal to either acknowledge the proposed 2011 agreement, even as a discussion draft, or propose its own agreement is disheartening. Put bluntly, I cannot fathom a scenario where this position is designed to foster an agreement between the parties.

After consulting with the Business Committee and tribal members, Vice Chairman Kahn and I are willing to participate in the November 12th meeting to give the County a final opportunity to engage in a meaningful dialogue. However, absent substantive progress and a tangible change in the tone of the dialogue, we are not inclined to continue our participation in this process, because as you will recall, the tribe is under no legal obligation to enter into a cooperative agreement. We engaged in these discussions because it was the right thing to do, but we simply cannot justify further expenditure of time or resources on a process if it is designed to fail.

It is my sincere hope that an unproductive September and October give way to a productive November. You have my firm commitment that if true government to government negotiations begin, you will have a willing and committed partner. For the good of the residents of Santa Barbara County and the Chumash people, I sincerely hope the coming weeks will be more fruitful.

As always, should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or have your staff contact Sam Cohen, our General Counsel, at scohen@santaynezchumash.org.

Sincerely,



Vincent Armenta
Chairman
Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

cc: Chairman Don Young
Ranking Member Raul Ruiz
Members of the House Resources Committee