



Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Costanoan/Ohlone Indians  
*Historically known as "San Juan Bautista Band and San Juan Band" Indians of California*  
PO Box 5272 | Galt, CA 95622

February 18, 2016

Good evening Commissioners, Madame Chair,

My name is Valentin Lopez and I am the Chairman of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Our Tribe is comprised of the documented descendants of the indigenous peoples taken to missions San Juan Bautista and Santa Cruz. We are writing to request that the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission not recommend that Mount Umunhum Radar Tower be added to the Santa Clara Heritage Resource Inventory.

Mount Umunhum is the site of the Tribe's Creation Story, which occurred over 15,000 years ago. Mount Umunhum is sacred and hallowed ground to all Ohlone. According to our Creation story, the Creator very specifically selected our people to live on these lands and to care for all living things. For over 800 generations our ancestors cared for our four-legged, finned, winged, and plant relatives. The most important elements regarding the stewardship of our environment were our sacred prayers and ceremonies.

Mount Umunhum is a Sacred Site. Our Tribal ancestors regularly climbed to the peak of Mount Umunhum to offer prayers and to hold Sacred Ceremonies. Our people are closest to Creator when we are on the peak of Mt. Umunhum. The vista from Mt. Umunhum provided the opportunity for our ancestors to pray to the four directions; east, west, north and south. Praying to the four directions was important to maintaining balance in our life.

It's important to recognize that our prayers include prayers for peace. It would be ironic and antithetical to have a monument to the cold war on a Sacred Mountain that has been, and continues to be, a location to pray for peace and the healing of Mother Earth.

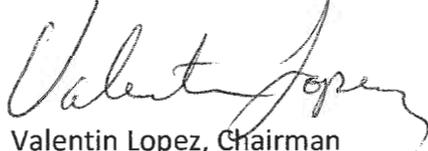
When Mid Pen consulted with our Tribe as a stake holder to Mount Umunhum, we requested that a place be designated that allowed for prayers to the four directions. Since these consultation Mid Pen offered the opportunity for our members to visit Mt. Umunhum and we immediately held ceremony there, including prayers to the four directions and having a traditional dance there with our Miwok brothers and sisters to whom Mount Umunhum is also a Sacred mountain. It is our hope that Mount Umunhum will become a destination for prayer for all people.

Because of the tragic history of our Tribe our voice has often times been forgotten, ignored or erased. The Sacredness of Mount Umunhum has also been forgotten, ignored or erased. The mineral extraction, toxic contamination and development of a military radar installation on Mount Umunhum desecrated our Sacred Mountain. It is time to recognize Mount Umunhum as one of the most Sacred Sites in all Santa Clara County.

To designate the short lived Mount Umunhum Radar Tower as an historical land mark, worthy of honoring the history of the cold war, while at the same time ignoring its ancient history as one of the most important Sacred Sites of all Ohlone people only perpetuates the view that indigenous peoples and their cultures, ceremonies, and religions are not part of our nation's important historical and cultural heritage. As Chairman of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, I am obligated to inform the Commission that our Tribal traditions, customs, and ceremonies are an invaluable part of the County's cultural and historical heritage, and that those Tribal traditions and ceremonial practices continue today.

I strongly urge the Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission not to recommend Mount Umunhum Radar Tower be added to the Santa Clara Heritage Resource Inventory.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valentin Lopez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Valentin Lopez, Chairman  
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