

C. David and M. Andriette Culbertson

February 6, 2017

Member of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

SUBJECT: Ad Hoc Subcommittee Discussions with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash
Indians –

Honorable Board Members:

I am writing to offer comments on the Board letter in the hopes that the process you are now deciding to undertake will be fair to all and result in informed decisions.

The Board is well aware of the many hours spent by Supervisors Adam and Farr in the Ad Hoc Committee meetings last year. The public also devoted considerable time in offering constructive comments during these public meetings. Apparently, the idea now is to exclude the public from active discussions between the County and the Band until an unspecified point in time, before the issues will be heard in public by the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

While the current proposal is a departure from the past practice, what is absent from the Board letter is a structure for discussions (which issues will be discussed, where do the parties stand now, etc.) and the identity of the individuals participating in the discussions. I believe that the public has a right to know those facts now. Further, the process would be more transparent if, within 72 hours of completing a discussion meeting, the County staff would publish a summary of issues considered and any information exchanged.

The Ad Hoc Committee meetings are to follow these discussions, but the Board letter proposes to announce these meetings by Brown Act meeting notice requirements, presumably a 72-hour notice. This is a very short time for the public to accommodate attendance at these meetings. I suggest that the meeting schedule be well in advance of the meeting so that the public may participate.

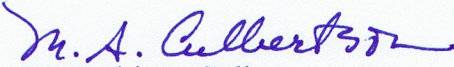
These requests are appropriate given that we have new County staff involved in this process, as well as two new Supervisors. Please bear in mind that the extensive involvement of the public, the transparency, is now being replaced by what is basically an administrative process, and therefore care must be exercised to insure that a framework exists for the public to remain informed in a timely manner.

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Finally, I am puzzled as to the absence of any mention of the signing of the grant deed for the 1400 acres on Inauguration Day. Several Executive Orders were signed on January 20, 2017, and it is unclear what, if any, impact that would/should have had on the Regional Director that day. While Supervisor Hartmann's January 27, 2017 letter focuses on one of the Executive Orders, it references the January 19, 2017 appeal decision instead of the signing of the grant deed. It would seem to me that a closer relationship exists between the Executive Order and the January 20, 2017 signing of the grant deed than disclosed in the Board letter, which does not mention the grant deed at all.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I am unable to attend the hearing on February 7.

Sincerely,


M. Andriette Culbertson