## Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians



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BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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November 15, 2012

Supervisor Linda Parks Ventura County Board of Supervisors County Government Center 800 S. Victoria Avenue Ventura, CA 93009

RE: Santa Susana Field Laboratory ("SSFL")

Declaration as "Excess" federal property by GSA

Dear Supervisor Parks:

We apologize for not scheduling a meeting with you earlier to discuss the intentions of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash ("Tribe") as to the SSFL.

Most people have heard about the Burro Flats Caves and the pictographs that are inside. Few people know that much of the NASA and Boeing sites have an enormous history as a ceremonial gathering place for the Chumash people. Scholars have also described the site as cross-roads for both the Chumash and Tongva/Fernandeño tribes and possibly also other tribes.

Representatives of the Tribe have already met with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control ("DTSC") to reassure them that the Tribe shares their concern with the cleanup of the SSFL. NASA will remain responsible for the cleanup of the site and ownership by the Tribe will have no adverse effect at all on the environmental clean up.

Ownership by the federal government of the NASA site and its security has indirectly protected the Burro Flats Cave site and other Native American cultural sites at SSFL. To date, however, there has been little or no concern for the Chumash and other tribal sacred sites and cultural history at SSFL in relation to the clean up or disposition of the site. This is in part due to the ambiguous federal and State laws regarding cultural resource protection.

In any effort to further protect the cultural resources at the SSFL and to elevate the level of dialogue on cultural resources protection, the Tribe has requested the Department of the Interior to request fee title to the NASA property on behalf of the Tribe. As the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is the only federally recognized Chumash tribe, it is the only tribe authorized to request fee title at the excess or pre-surplus stage on behalf of itself and other Native Americans having interest in the property. Taking fee title to the land as opposed to placing it in federal trust also prevents it from being used as a casino.

We are also concerned that you may not value the site for its significance to the U.S. Space program. We are told that over 30,000 rocket test occurred at SSFL. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the rocket test stands would have historical significance just for being over 50 years old, not withstanding their contribution to space exploration. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash wishes to preserve all of the prehistory and current history of the site.

The Tribe remains committed to protecting the Native American cultural sites at the SSFL while working with all other stakeholders and neighbors to the SSFL property to ensure the clean up of the site. If you have any additional question, please contact the Tribe's Government Affairs Officer Sam Cohen at 805-245-9083, email: sochen@santaynezchumash.org.

Sincerely,

Vincent P. Armenta, Tribal Chairman

CC (Supervisors at same address): Supervisor Steve Bennett, District 1 Supervisor Kathy Long, District 3 Supervisor Peter C. Foy, District 4 Supervisor John C. Zaragosa, District 5

CC (to GSA):
Daniel Tangerlini, Acting Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)
1275 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20417