

Mona Sespe
P.O. Box 303
Pala, CA 92059

October 8, 2009

John Robertus, Executive Officer
Attn: Mike Porter, Engineering Geologist
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Diego Region
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123-4340

Dear Mr. Robertus and Mike Porter,

My name is Mona Sespe, I am a member of the Pala Band of Mission Indians and here I am again 25 years later still talking to you about Chokla (Gregory Mountain). Our people have continuously prayed and had ceremonies there since the beginning of time. My family has been the caretakers of this area and our Tribe still utilizes this area for ceremonial purposes as of today. Your predecessors before you understood the significance and the importance for our people to maintain our right of Freedom of Religion, which would be denied if you approve the application for Water Quality Certification for the proposed Gregory Canyon Bridge. About 20 years ago, Pala, Pauma, Pechanga, Soboba, Rincon, and La Jolla Tribes came together in support of the protection of our sacred mountain Chokla. Native people come to this area to ask for help. My Great Grandmother, her people before her, myself and members of my family have all come here for ceremony and prayer. The religious significance of Medicine Rock is evident by the paintings that represent puberty right ceremonies. The Native people are the caretakers of Mother Earth. It is our responsibility to our Creator and Mother Earth to protect and preserve all of the animal world, plant world and sacred places. Some of the animals that need our protection include the frog, mountain lion, kangaroo rat, and the Least Bells Vireo to name a few. Our culturally significant native plants needed for basketry include Willows, Oak, Cotton Wood, and numerous food plants.

Everyday people are talking about water and that we don't have enough and need to be rationing it. Yet you are willing to sacrifice our river by permitting a dump on top of it. Not only that but you are only permitting the bridge not the whole landfill. This threatens the Earth, the Ocean, the animal world and plant world. Our water supply needs to be protected from contamination. How do we do this? The other question is, are we expendable? If you approve the water quality certification for only the bridge and not the entire landfill you're giving Gregory Canyon Ltd. permission to commit Genocide. You will be denying our Freedom of Religion. I have heard people say that Pala doesn't want the dump because of the Casino. That is so far from the truth. We have stood

Mona Sespe
P.O. Box 303
Pala, CA 92059

together for 25 years to ask the County of San Diego to deny any and all projects from destroying our sacred mountain so that we may continue to practice our ways and traditions. This area is also registered with the State of California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File. If you approve the application for Water Quality Certification for the Gregory Canyon Bridge you are telling all people that religious freedom does not matter. This is saying that the County of San Diego County Regional Water Quality Control Board condones taking any church and replacing it with a dump. This not only denies freedom of Religion, but commits Genocide on Native people and would be opening the door for your place of worship to be destroyed by a dump.

We are in the year 2009 and I am not ashamed to beg you to outright deny the application for the Gregory Canyon Bridge. You have the right to do this, and it is time to stop approving bad projects. I am begging you to please protect our right to Freedom of Religion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mona M. Sespe". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Mona Sespe
Pala Tribal Member