



PALA BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

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May 24, 2010

Environmental Health Coalition
2727 Hoover St.
National City, CA 91950

RE: Proposed Gregory Canyon Landfill

Dear Environmental Health Coalition Members and other South Bay Communities,

As Tribal Chairman for the Pala Band of Mission Indians I am writing to request that all Environmental Health Coalition Members and other South Bay Communities join in our opposition to the proposed Gregory Canyon Landfill. For the past twenty years the Pala Band of Mission Indians has been fighting along side local residents and concerned citizens to put an end to this ill-conceived project.

Gregory Canyon is a pristine undeveloped canyon considered sacred to Native Americans in Southern California and drains directly into the San Luis Rey River which is sacred to our culture and way of life. It would be wrong to place a garbage dump on the banks of a major river and if approved this landfill will forever threaten valuable and decreasing water resources. Taking into consideration California's ongoing drought it is inconceivable that the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers would approve construction of a landfill so close to the San Luis Rey River. Past landfill projects such as Las Pulgas and Poway landfill have shown that so called protective liners all fail eventually. Wildfires and earthquakes will threaten even the best landfill liner.

As we all know this water source is much more valuable to southern California residents and farmers than a trash dump with a 30 year life span. The San Luis Rey Aquifer not only provides many existing citizens and local farmers in our region with a dependable water supply but has great potential in the future for storing and providing additional water supplies. Its value has been recognized not only by the San Diego County Water Authority, but also by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the State of California, the Federal Government, and the City of Oceanside.

The relevant time frame for protecting water quality extends well beyond the life of a permit or "closure plan" or a period of property ownership. The time frame extends over many generations, and once these precious water resources are gone, we can never get them back. The waste disposed at Gregory Canyon will remain a threat to drinking water supplies in the Pala Basin and other down gradient aquifers for hundreds of years. By that time, the operators of the facility would be long gone with their profits, leaving the water agencies the task of addressing water contamination and finding alternative sources.

The time is now for environmental justice groups and spiritual communities to join Southern California Tribes in our struggle to protect our sacred lands and water and to protect all communities from the negative impacts of unnecessary projects. Please join us and voice your opposition to the Army Corp of Engineers so that we all can protect California's Tribal Cultural and valuable water resources for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "S".

Robert H. Smith,
Tribal Chairman