

State Historical Lands Commission
Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer
California State Office of Historic Preservation
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RE: SUPPORT for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL)
Traditional Cultural Property (TCP)/Archeological District
SHLC Hearing Date: August 14, 2020

To the Honorable Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO):

At the request of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (Tribe or Chumash), the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) requests the support of the State Historical Lands Commission (SHLC) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to support listing the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) on the State and National Register of Historic Places as the Burro Flats Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) called the Burro Flats Archeological District.

Listing the pictographs and archeo-astronomical site at Burro Flats Painted Cave in the National Register is just the beginning. Subsequent archeological investigations demanded by the Chumash and other tribes by DOE, NASA and Boeing have begun to uncover more than ten (10) caves with pictographs and over 100 cultural resource sites of historical and sacred importance over the entire SSFL site.

SSFL is in the Simi Hills of Ventura County and is the location of the former Rocketdyne rocket test stands. SSFL is the spiritual crossroads of the Chumash, Ferdandeño/Tataviam and Gabrieleno/Tongva Native peoples and all three tribes work have created a Sacred Sites Council to work together to better address SSFL issues.

SSFL is also one of the few and possibly the only location on the planet where a pre-historic Native American solstice astronomical site co-exists with the test stands for the rockets that propelled the space program and space shuttle.

For some time now, the Chumash have been trying to protect the cultural resources at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). The entire SSFL has been listed on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File (SLF), pursuant to California Public Resources Code §5097.94(a) since 2014. In addition, the entire site has been declared as sacred under federal Executive Order (E.O.) 13007 (December 2012) by the Chumash.

To provide additional protection for the cultural resources and sacred sites at SSFL in perpetuity, the Chumash have documented Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) and Landscape status under National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106, and other federal and state laws, and most recently have submitted an application for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register).

The NAHC supports and requests that the SHLC and the SHPO support listing the SSFL on the State and National Register as a TCP/Burro Flats Archeological District.

Sincerely,

Laura Miranda
Chairperson