

PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Alameda County Administration Building
224 West Winton Avenue, Room 111
Hayward, CA 94544
(510) 670-5400

October 6, 2016

Secretary John Laird
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Laird:

The Alameda County Parks, Recreation and Historical Commission urges you to take timely action in furtherance of the permanent preservation of your agency's 3,400 acres of Tesla park land in eastern Alameda County. It is an area of over 5 of Alameda County's 732 square miles.

We believe you should persuade the Off Highway Motorized Vehicle Recreation Commission, at its hearing on the project in Sacramento on 21 October 2016, to suspend the environmental review process underway on off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation use.

Final approval and certification of the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) General Plan and Draft FEIR will open Tesla to OHV use. Instead, your agency should support steps, including legislation, to permanently preserve Tesla by establishing it as a natural and cultural preserve.

As attested by 40 speakers at a hearing on the proposed OHV expansion in Tracy on 5 February 2016 (convincingly to two of our Commission members who attended and testified), Tesla has many, many sensitive biologic and cultural resources important for our County and the State. It is a California Native Plant Society botanical priority protection area and an Audubon important bird area. It is home to seven threatened and endangered species and habitats, and over 50 rare species and habitats.

Worse, OHV usage into the expanded area would interfere drastically with wildlife use of the 25-mile long wildlife corridor through the Altamont Hills in eastern Alameda County connecting Mount Diablo with Mount Hamilton. The proposed OHV mile-wide, 5-mile long east-west expansion lies totally athwart the main north-south wildlife corridor.

Tesla has great cultural and historic significance for Alameda County as well as all of California. It is the location of the historic Tesla town and mine site and of sacred Native American sites. Expanding the existing Carnegie SVRA and opening Tesla to OHV use conflicts with local land use plans and policies would not be acceptable, because Tesla is simply not appropriate for OHV use.

Further, the assertions in the Draft FEIR that some OHV use would have insignificant adverse

environmental impacts are very questionable. Certification of an FEIR which evades disclosure of undeniably, unavoidable adverse landform, habitat, and cultural impacts would lead the State astray, and delay a productive resolution of the problems with the project.

Finally, the Alameda County Open Space Committee, which has reserves in excess of \$12 million from landfill mitigation fees for purposes of wildlife habitat and open space preservation in eastern Alameda County, decided at its 15 September 2016 meeting that preservation of the project area is one of its top priorities.

Allowing the State Parks OHV expansion plan to continue on its current course would only delay the preservation of Tesla's resources, an irreplaceable treasure. We all have the duty to preserve Tesla with no OHV use so that this unique and sensitive natural and cultural landscape is permanently protected for future generations.

Dionisio Rosario (Oakland), Chair

David Tam (Berkeley), Member

Al Minard (Fremont) Jerry Caveglia (Hayward)
Annatee Allen (Oakland)

[Other members who wish to sign]

Alameda County Parks, Recreation and Historical Commission

cc: Californian Parks and Recreation Director Mangat
Alameda County Board of Supervisors