PECHANGA INDIAN RESERVATION
Temecula Band of Luiseño Mission Indians

Post Office Box 1477 • Temecula, CA 92593
Telephone (951) 770-6000 Fax (951) 695-1778

Tribal Chairman:
Mark Macarro

Council Members:
Catalina R. Chacon
Corrina R. Garbani Sanchez
Andrew Masiel, Sr.
Robert "R.J." Munoa
Russell "Butch" Murphy
Benjamin "Ben" Vasquez

Tribal Secretary:
Louise Burke

Tribal Treasurer:
Christina McMenamin

January 22, 2013

Jodi Gillette
Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs—Domestic Policy Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Opposition to Nomination of Ms. Lynne Sebastian to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Dear Ms. Gillette:

I write on behalf of the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians in strong opposition to the nomination of Ms. Lynne Sebastian to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Our position is not taken lightly.

Our Tribe encountered Ms. Sebastian in 2011 when she was hired by a national mining company that wanted to put a highly controversial mega mine on top of the Tribe's one and only Creation Place, Pu'eska Mountain.

In that matter, she rendered paid, "expert" opinion on the cultural value of the Tribe's sacred place without even speaking with our Tribe or personally surveying the geographical area she was testifying on. When it came time to answer the County Commissioners' questions regarding her testimony, she was not present, having left so that the mining company's lawyer could respond for her.

Her testimony was inaccurate, uninformed and disrespectful to our People, and had the sole purpose of advocating for the destruction of our sacred place, over the objections of all seven Luiseno bands who share this Origin Area. Her testimony also did not correctly apply National Register of Historic Places criteria and guidance, a critical job of all Council members. Specifically, she violated one of the core tenants of National Register Bulletin 38 and testified her own personal version of the Tribe's creation account attempting to discredit the Tribe as not knowing their own history. Bulletin 38 cautions against ethnocentrism and states, "It is vital to evaluate properties thought to have traditional cultural significance from the standpoint of those who may ascribe such significance to them."

While her opinion in the Liberty Quarry matter was ultimately unpersuasive to the decision makers (the quarry was denied), it clearly demonstrated to the many tribes in opposition, her inability - and unwillingness - to recognize sacred places as worthy of preservation and we seriously question whether she would follow the ACHP's own guidance on identifying and considering tribal sacred places and cultural landscapes.

Unfortunately, our experience is not the only time Ms. Sebastian has tried to aid and abet the mining industry in the attempted destruction of tribal sacred grounds. Over ten years ago, Ms. Sebastian was hired by Glamis Gold to challenge the Quechan Tribe's well-documented sacred area at Indian Pass. Like Pu'eska, her opinion failed, and the project was denied by former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt who respected the Tribe's religious and cultural values.

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Had tribes been consulted on her nomination to this important post, we would have conveyed this strong opposition at that time. She should not be looked at by your administration for expertise on tribal cultural resources. Her appointment is an affront to Indian Country.

We respectfully request that her name be immediately withdrawn. Should you or President Obama need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Macarro
Tribal Chairman

Copy: Wayne Donaldson, Chairman, ACHP