

America's Great Outdoors and Equal Justice

White House Council on Environmental Quality, Nancy Sutley
Environmental Protection Agency, Lisa Jackson
Department of Interior, Ken Salazar

Thank you all for attending, and thank you to those who made all of this possible.

In the end, all of us here today are taking about our relationship to the land. And for the Indigenous People it is very different. The most important message here is that we are on Tongva land. They are the people who should be making the decisions about their land and the sacred sites on it. This should include both non-federally recognized and recognized tribes.

I do not live far from here and so I am lucky. You see, I have spent time here at Whittier Narrows – fishing across the street with my children when they were young, rode their bikes up and down all these paths while my wife jogged. I remember Spicer, my dog, dragging me into the Lake chasing the ducks and geese. So, as a local resident, I appreciate my green open space. This is where I grew up and raised a family.

I really don't know of a human being who hates to smell a rose or sit in the shade of a tree on a warm day. I can't imagine anyone who would be against parks, beaches, and trails in the San Gabriel Mountains. I have hiked the Santa Anita Creek to see the waterfall. My elders have the fondest memories of Marrano Beach just up the road. I support a National Recreation Area that includes indigenous input every step of the way.

But deeper into my heart and soul lays the essence of who I am and where most Indigenous People find themselves today.

We live in the conquered space, but we are attached forever to the sacred places of our Ancestors.

You see, I am from the Acjachemen Nation. We, the Juanenos from the Acjachemen Nation, have loved Mother Earth for more than 10,000 years. And our attachment goes beyond just all the pretty little plants, flowers, the trees and the shade they provide. Our culture and very existence are connected to the earth. Preservation of our land is a matter of life and death.

Our religious practices are attached to the land. One of our sacred sites, Panhe, is under attack by road makers, corporations, and pollution. And we need all of you in this room to help us protect it and San Onofre State Beach. All of you. I would not ask you to tear down a church, mosque, temple or synagogue for the sake of “progress.” Please meet with us to save Panhe.

I believe we are here to dignify ourselves by sharing truth and honesty, so I am compelled to ask officials to assist us. I have filed an Administrative Complaint with the Department of Interior and EPA to save California’s state parks for all. The New York Times says federal intervention may be needed to save endangered state parks. I agree. Many Sacred Sites are in state parks. I am working with Robert Garcia and The City Project. Yet the complaint we filed has yet to be investigated after 10 months, far beyond the 20 day dead line. Please help us.

I was reading an article on the San Francisco Peaks in Arizona, where 13 tribes are trying to save sacred land from desecration. A writer wrote “**considered** sacred.” I thought I better look up consider, it means to think carefully about or ponder on (a problem, decision, etc); contemplate. But Indigenous history is often forgotten and distorted by

famous professors, prestigious universities, governments and even well meaning people, so I am not surprised. We are questioned and judged, even about our religious practices. Please save San Francisco Peaks.

The bankers and financial corporations have been saved. Now it is time to save the people and their land.

Please end the wars and bring our troops home.

Peace,

Robert (Bob) Bracamontes

Yu-va'-tal 'A'lla-mal

(Black Crow)

Acjachemen Nation,

Juaneno Tribe

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