



July 26, 2006

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Speaker Fabian Nuñez
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0046

Secretary Mike Chrisman
Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Hart Office Building
Room 331
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Preserve California's premier natural landscape at Tejon Ranch for future generations!

Dear <legislator>:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and our 440,000+ members statewide, we write to convey our strong support for the protection and preservation of the extraordinary natural landscape of Tejon Ranch and to urge your assistance toward that end.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Tejon Ranch is a national or state park quality landscape and one of the California's most valuable unprotected natural areas. The property is a magnificent and diverse ecosystem encompassing over 270,000 acres at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, ranging from the oak dappled foothills of the southern Sierra Nevada, over the fir-topped peaks of the Tehachapi Mountains, and onto the poppy-covered desert slopes of the Antelope Valley. It is imperative that this diverse landscape be protected as an irreplaceable part of California's natural and cultural heritage, and for its unrivaled biological values.

Tejon Ranch is an important biological corridor connecting the southern Sierra Nevada with the coast ranges and southern California's National Forests. It is a hotspot for biological diversity, home to as many as 20 state and federally listed protected species, most notably the California condor, which is currently rebounding from the brink of extinction. Much of Tejon Ranch has been designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as critical habitat for the condor -- habitat essential for the survival and recovery of the species. Tejon Ranch is also rich in Native American cultural and sacred sites and is steeped in California history. Indeed, to visit Tejon Ranch is to travel back in time to experience an old California unmarred by subdivisions and strip malls.

The Tejon Ranch Company, which owns Tejon Ranch, has recently announced a series of large-scale developments that, if constructed as proposed, will threaten the natural and cultural heritage of the Ranch, jeopardize the recovery of the California condor by development within its critical habitat, and exacerbate the problem of urban sprawl along the I-5 corridor from Los Angeles to Bakersfield. Our groups believe that it is possible to recognize the Tejon Ranch Company's ownership rights by allowing reasonable development on portions of the Ranch while still preserving its key natural and cultural features.

While the Tejon Ranch Company has proposed for public acquisition a conservation area on the Ranch of up to 100,000 acres -- potentially to be augmented further as development projects are approved -- conservation biologists have recommended that approximately 90 percent (245,000 acres) of the Tejon Ranch be preserved to ensure that ecosystem processes are maintained. Instead of a piece-meal approach to conservation and development, we believe a comprehensive Ranch-wide plan is essential that will ensure protection of California's world-class natural heritage while allowing sensible development in appropriate areas of Tejon Ranch.

Tejon Ranch is largely roadless and unfragmented by urbanization, something very rare in southern California. The intact habitats, healthy watersheds, majestic scenery, and unpolluted streams of Tejon Ranch are important public resources. Tejon plays a crucial role as an ecological connection between southern California and the southern Sierra Nevada mountains. Located within 40 miles of the largest population center in the state, Tejon Ranch is an ideal location for a world-class natural heritage park. The drumbeat of development is increasing in tempo. Lands not protected will see the rising tide of cities streaming through them to destroy the quality of life all of us have known in California .

For all these reasons, we urge you to include Tejon Ranch among the state's highest priorities for protection of private wildlands. We further request that you work with our organizations to maintain the natural and cultural values of Tejon Ranch and to ensure that this vital part of our heritage does not fall victim to urban sprawl. In view of the Tejon Ranch Company's pending development plans, and recognizing the rapid pace

of development in the region and the pressures for agricultural and natural land conversion, prompt and positive action is needed to develop a comprehensive plan for the Ranch and to design and implement a strategy for its conservation. We are convinced that a solution is possible and that the piece-meal development of Tejon's resources would be an enormous loss for California and its unique natural heritage.

We look forward to working with you to achieve meaningful conservation of Tejon Ranch, including the creation of a state or national park for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

Very truly yours,

Peter Galvin
Conservation Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Joel Reynolds
Senior Attorney
Director, Urban Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Gary A. Patton
Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League

Terry O'Day
Executive Director
Environment Now

Bill Corcoran
Senior Regional Representative
Sierra Club