



Jennifer Olaranna Viereck

PO Box 420, Tecopa CA 92389 760-852-4151

hummingbird@TecopaCA.com

January 26, 2005

Supervisor Richard Cervantes
1044 Hunter Rd.
Lone Pine CA 93545

Dear Richard (and fellow Supervisors),

As a result of your recent discussion with Jann Rucquoi, and your conversation with me before Christmas, I wanted to clarify as much as possible the situation here with the Tecopa Hot Springs, as I understand it, and with our nonprofit corporation.

As we predicted clearly and repeatedly in correspondence and in person with county management over the years, the majority of full-time and seasonal Tecopa residents are unwilling to do business with California Land Management. This stems either from an unwillingness to break the Tecopa Treaty, or to sanction other imposed changes. The park campground stands virtually empty and the local economy has suffered greatly. Some stay away entirely, and others pay to use the baths out of desperation for relief from ailments, pain or loneliness. Most are extremely bitter toward county government. The only way this situation can resolve itself is through fair and definitive action by your Board, or through attrition of Tecopa residents until there is no one left to care.

However, I feel it is important to make clear there has been, to my knowledge, no organized campaign for a "boycott". There has certainly been a lot of discussion about it as individuals asked each other what they intended to do, and Sage Williams maintained a sign in her yard for a while. But you and other county management people must understand that this is a near-unanimous decision individually made by the majority of impacted residents of all ages and backgrounds, one at a time. The county could force this on us, but they could not make us complicit.

For many, the choice involved facing physical and emotional suffering and sacrifice. Winter residents who spent ten, twenty or thirty years calling Tecopa home are gone. People who grew up here, who are third and fourth generation residents, have given up using the baths. There is no heart to this community any longer, just uniformed CLM personnel patrolling the parking lot, looking for cheaters and money.

Personally, my beliefs do not permit me to expect healing from these waters, while paying to break a Treaty with the Paiute that defines their ethical use. Given that the waters were additionally reserved for public use by President Hoover in Executive Order 5362 in 1930, I feel that paying a for-profit corporation to access them is an additional

breach of the law. I am now wearing a neck brace again intermittently, and working through diminished use of my right arm. I have accepted short-term job opportunities in other hot springs communities.

Regarding the Hummingbird Family Resource Center, now called Hummingbird Family Resources, Inc., we no longer operate out of our own facility. Given the loss of county funds and the decimation of the local winter community, which was our primary fundraising and volunteer base, we were unable to sustain the overhead. Therefore, we were forced to reject the Community Development Block Grant to purchase and renovate the property, as it would have obligated us to operate the facility for an additional 5 ½ years under these conditions. The property owner also withdrew her offer to sell, when it appeared that the county might be trying to use this situation to acquire the property for their own purposes. Her support was for the Hummingbird Center only.

However, we now conduct activities at the Tecopa Community Center, as we used to. Perhaps you saw the article about our multi-agency Christmas Program in the Inyo Register, attended by 20 children and their families, with lots of treats, ornament making, Mr. And Mrs. Santa arriving by fire truck, and wonderful gifts for all 43 children in the region. We are mainly raising funds through recycling aluminum, which currently brings \$1.45/lb.

Our Hummingbird non-profit corporation is still fully viable, with an active local Board of Directors, many email contacts, and our Park Advisory Board, which includes highly experienced park and hot spring operators across the western states. Many people use our website to stay current on the CLM situation. Our proposal to operate the Tecopa Park and Campground as a community facility still stands as written, or could be updated and amended through careful negotiation with our Board, county government and the local community. Our communities still badly need funding for Children's Programs and other local resources more than ever. Of course, it is impossible to reverse the clock, or to know whether past residents would return to Tecopa now that they have found new homes. All we can do is try.

Please feel free to contact myself or other Hummingbird members at any time. We all wish you and your colleagues the best in your new roles as Supervisors. It may look daunting, but you do have the trust and support of the people. If we can ever help provide hospitality or advance notice for your visits to this area, please call on us at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer O. Viereck". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Jennifer Olaranna Viereck