

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernandez

Chairman

Committee on Natural Resources

United States House of Representatives

Washington, D.C.

1324 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: H.R. 7581 Yurok Lands Act of 2022

9-23-2022

Dear Ms. Leger Fernandez

My name is Lincoln Jackson. I am a lineal descendant of the Xowun'nilqe:t, Noleh-ding, and Yisinch'in villages existing along the ridgelines, mountain faces, and valleys of Redwood Creek, Humboldt County, California. I share this honor with over 100 living relatives, and I am writing out of concern about H.R. 7581 Yurok Lands Act of 2022 designating Bald Hills Road as the Yurok Scenic Byway.

To my knowledge there has been no consultation or engagement with the Redwood Creek people by the Redwood National and State Parks, nor project notification by the neighboring and co-management Tribes the Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribe regarding the Yurok Scenic Byway designation and any development occurring in the Bald Hills area.

It is our understanding that archaeological surveys and policy making are happening without meaningful dialogue about the history, but more importantly, future of the Redwood Valley with Redwood Creek people in mind. We are often omitted from history and referred to by our Yurok designation as Chilula. We are Xwe:ylq'it-xwe (Hoi-kut) People of the Redwoods. We are well intertwined with the Redwood Forests of Humboldt County of which we draw our name from.

Our originating village, Xowun'nilqe:t, also in reference to redwoods, was so grand, so geographically and culturally significant it bore a title in three languages; there are only two other villages that come to mind with this distinction. They are the Hupa's Ta'k'imil-ding and Yurok's Requa. Each are anchored in history and bore the brunt of manifest destiny. Only Xowun'nilqe:t is not afforded the same reverence and protections as these other Tribes have been granted and have become accustomed to.

Our people are not afforded the rights to hunt and gather in our ancestral territory, we cannot reclaim our prayer areas or ensure the integrity of our sites and preserve the viewsheds. Bald Hills road is the dividing line that severs one half of a once thriving community from another. In its entirety from Highway 101 to the Pine Creek junction it lies on top of significant areas of cultural and historical distinction important to Redwood Creek people. It is more than a name designation; it is a tactical erasure of a place and its people in existence since time immemorial.

We hope that your committee demonstrates inclusiveness, and equity in consideration of this Bill. I ask that the Committee on Natural Resources uphold its trust responsibility to all Indians and help us protect our sacred lands.

Sincerely,

*Lincoln Jackson*