

September 19th, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 558-3160

RE: SIGN AB 1086 (Bauer-Kahan) Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area into law

Honorable Governor Newsom:

I am writing this letter on behalf of SAVE THE FROGS!, a California-based public charity dedicated to protecting endangered amphibian populations and promoting a society that respects and appreciates nature and wildlife. We work in California, across the USA, and around the world to prevent habitat destruction and the extinction of amphibians.

SAVE THE FROGS! strongly supports AB 1086 and urges you to sign AB 1086 into law.

AB 1086 (Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area) would allow the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to sell the portion of the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) known as the "Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area" or locally as "Tesla Park", that has never been opened for public use, to a local public agency or non-profit organization for conservation purposes if it is determined that disposing of the land is in the public interest. Proceeds from any such sale would be returned to the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division for use in an area that is appropriate for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use.

The OHMVR Division purchased the approximate 3,100 acre Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area in the late 1990s without an acquisition EIR and public review. For 20 years there has been intense and growing opposition from across the community to opening Tesla to OHV recreation use. In 2016, after two prior EIR attempts, the OHMVR Commission adopted a general plan and EIR which incorporated the Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area into Carnegie SVRA and identified it for OHV recreation use. The project is now in litigation, including a challenge by the County of Alameda.

AB 1086 should be signed into law because it provides an appropriate pathway to resolve this local 20-year controversy and permanently protects Tesla's extraordinary biologic and cultural resource values which are an irreplaceable legacy for the region and State.

Tesla's unique biological importance is irrefutable:

- Its location at the intersection of biotic zones results in rare biodiversity and serves as species-saving corridors and buffers in a time of climate change.
- California's earliest naturalists, including Joseph LeConte, Joseph Grinnell and John Muir, recognized the high conservation value of the area where Tesla is situated.
- Because of this biodiversity, the area had been a research location for Universities, particularly UC Berkeley, since the middle of the middle of the 20th century.
- Preservation of Tesla's unique array of sensitive and rare resources are priorities specifically identified by numerous Federal, State and local policy goals.

Tesla holds:

- 42 special status wildlife species, including 8 Federally or State listed and Candidate species
- 13 special status and 28 locally rare plant species
- 7 sensitive vegetation communities
- Designated Critical Habitat for California Red-Legged Frogs (our state amphibian) and Alameda whipsnakes.
- East Bay California Native Plant Society Botanical Priority Protection Area
- Multi-agency designated Critical Linkage Wildlife Habitat Corridor through the preservation priority Diablo Range
- Golden Eagle Nesting and Foraging Area and Audubon Important Bird Area

This biological diversity is matched by significant cultural values including:

- Native Californian sites of archeological, spiritual, and ceremonial importance
- Historic town site and coal mine of Tesla, and other European settler era historic sites

Sign AB 1086

Similarly, a long-established body of peer-reviewed studies shows that recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) use causes irreparable damage to soils, vegetation and wildlife. As demonstrated in Carnegie SVRA, recreational OHV use will severely diminish Tesla's resources and ecological integrity.

Preservation of Tesla is a local conservation priority and AB 1086 is a vital local district measure. All of the Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area is located in east Alameda County. Numerous local land use plans and conservation objectives identify the Tesla area for open space preservation.

There is overwhelming local support for Tesla preservation and AB 1086 from community groups across the region, such as ours, officials and local public agencies including the County of Alameda, City of Livermore, East Bay Regional Park District, Livermore Area Recreation and Park District, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, and the Cities of Pleasanton and Dublin through the local Open Space Fund that has offered the funds for purchase.

The Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area has never been opened for OHV use nor any public use. AB 1086 does not affect Carnegie SVRA in any way, nor any of the existing OHV riding areas.

AB 1086 provides a wise and fair way to resolve this 20-year controversy in a manner that is good for State government, local agencies and the community, OHV users and the environment.

AB 1086 meets our collective duty to preserve Tesla's extraordinary native landscapes for future generations. AB 1086 is fair by allowing sale of Tesla to a local public agency or non-profit for conservation purposes with proceeds from any such sale returned to the OHMVR Division for use in a location suitable for OHV recreation. For these reasons and more, **we urge you to sign AB 1086 into law.**

Sincerely,



Kerry Kriger, Ph.D.

SAVE THE FROGS! Founder, Executive Director and Ecologist

Kerry@savethefrogs.com