



RESOLUTION No. 22-099

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF NEVADA

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL DESIGNATION OF THE DONNER SUMMIT TUNNELS AS A NATIONAL HISTORICAL LANDMARK AND ITS PRESERVATION THEREOF

WHEREAS, Nevada County has many historical landmarks and their preservation is valued by the County of Nevada per Resolution 69-102; and

WHEREAS, the the designation of historical landmarks is done at the local, state and federal levels; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Interior National Park Service administers the National Historical Landmarks Program as a federal designation program with the purpose to preserve the stories of nationally important historical events, places, and people for all Americans, amongst others; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Interior is currently considering an application for landmark designation of the Donner Summit Tunnels located in Nevada County via working with a local nonprofit organization called the Summit Tunnel Conservation; and

WHEREAS, the construction of the Donner Summit Tunnels are a part of the Transcontinental Railroad completed in 1869 that was made possible by the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 sponsored by California U.S. Senator and local resident of Nevada City, Senator Aaron Sargent; and

WHEREAS, the Sacramento, CA to Promontory Point, UT portion of the railroad was devised and constructed under the Central Pacific Railroad Corporation headed by four men, better known as the Big Four, included Charles Crocker, Colis P. Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Leland Stanford; and

WHEREAS, the Big Four hired Theodore Judah to map the railroad route through the Sierra Nevada Mountains that ended up being the most difficult construction portion due to the topography, geology and weather believed by many to not be feasible; and

WHEREAS, Charles Crocker became the construction manager and began hiring hundreds of Californians to construct the railroad; and

WHEREAS, by the time the railroad reached the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Crocker had hired 10,000 workers with approximately 8,000 being Chinese, to lay tracks, fill ravines, build trestles and bore tunnels; and

WHEREAS, the railroad and Donner Summit tunnels were constructed on tribal lands of indigenous peoples, including but not limited to the Washoe and Maidu Nisenan tribes; and

WHEREAS, fifteen 15 tunnels were bored through solid granite rock from Colfax to Truckee, with the longest tunnel near Donner Summit totaling 553 yards that took five years to complete as the largest United States labor project up to that time; and

WHEREAS, work proceeded year-round through the harsh winters of the Sierras with Crews working 24 hours a day making headway at only one foot a day using hand drills and black powder; and

WHEREAS, immigrant labor was used to construct the transcontinental railroad with Chinese immigrant labor employed for the most difficult and dangerous sections of Donner Summit Tunnel cutting through solid granite while being exposed to dangerous conditions of unstable explosives, fierce winter blizzards with snow averaging 18 feet, yet only receiving a fraction of compensation to their white counterparts; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra phase of the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1868 with the entire railroad spanning from Omaha, Nebraska to Sacramento being completed on April 28, 1869 when the Central Pacific met up with the Union Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah; and

WHEREAS, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad allowed for the public to travel from coast to coast in seven (7) days for \$65 versus six (6) months and \$1000 previously; and

WHEREAS, designation of the Donner Summit Tunnels will preserve Tunnels #6 and #7 along with the Chinese Wall, Native American petroglyphs, and the Chinese encampment area that will be maintained and preserved by the Summit Tunnel Conservation Association in cooperation with the United States Forest Service; and

WHEREAS, a National Landmark designation of the Donner Summit Tunnels would be the County's second national landmark designation since the designation of two Donner Party Campsites in 1961; and

WHEREAS, the designation of National Landmarks is significant by demonstrating exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, technology, and culture; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Truckee Donner Tunnels is in alignment with the Board's Priority Objective to promote economic development through partnerships that support small businesses and tourism sectors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada hereby proclaims its support for the national designation of the Donner Summit Tunnels as a National Historical Landmark and its preservation thereof.

FURTHER BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the County of Nevada honors and acknowledges the historical significance of the Donner Summit Tunnels is only possible due to the sacrifices of the indigenous peoples of Nevada County and inequitable treatment and subjugation of Chinese immigrants that will be remembered through the national designation of the Donner Summit Tunnels as a National Historical Landmark.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Nevada at a regular meeting of said Board, held on the 22nd day of February, 2022, by the following vote of said Board:

Ayes: Supervisors Heidi Hall, Edward Scofield, Dan Miller, Susan K. Hoek and Hardy Bullock.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

ATTEST:

JULIE PATTERSON HUNTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: _____



Susan K. Hoek, Chair

2/22/2022 cc: COB*