

HOLLY METZ. 63 WILLOW TERRACE, HOBOKEN, NJ 07030. (201) 792-2212

September 1, 1994

Mr. Robert C. Hight
Executive Director
California State Lands Commission
1807 13 Street
Sacramento, Ca 95814

copy

Dear Mr. Hight:

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed demolition of "Salvation Mountain," Leonard Knight's monumental sculptural creation in Niland, California.

I am familiar with such environmental artworks from my own research. For the past eight years I have been researching and writing about large-scale art by self-taught American artists; I have lectured at the Smithsonian, the Slade School of Art (U.K.), and at the New School for Social Research. Working with photographer Robert Foster, I have travelled widely, interviewing creators from a broad range of backgrounds in cities, suburbs, and in rural areas. Often the communities that host these exceptional works of art find the creations provide residents with a sense of pride and joy, while also drawing appreciative visitors. (So many visitors came to Tyree Guyton's Detroit neighborhood to see his art, for example, his dangerous block was transformed into a safe place for children to play outdoors. In a completely different setting, the northern Wisconsin community of Phillips has found that the siting of Fred Smith's "Wisconsin Concrete Park" in their town has brought thousands of tourists annually.)

Such works are part of a tradition recognized—and considered worthy of preservation—by scholars, artists, tourist boards, and cultural institutions, including the Museum of American Folk Art, the Smithsonian, and the Walker Art Center. It seems possible that any environmental problems that currently exist at "Salvation Mountain" can be corrected, so that this unique artwork can continue to inspire awe and wonder in visitors and residents alike. Please make every effort to save Mr. Knight's inspiring creation.

Yours truly,

Holly Metz

cc: SPACES