

Name:

Address:

Phone/Email:

Date:

Attn: Board of Directors
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022-1530
Email: info@openspace.org
Phone: 650-691-1200

Subject: Urgent Request to Recognize the Girouard Family's Occupancy Rights at Rhus Ridge

Dear Members of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board,

I am writing to urge you to recognize the Girouard family's occupancy rights and to resolve this matter by granting the Girouard family a long-term lease to remain in their home at Rhus Ridge. For over 50 years, the Girouard family has provided invaluable service to our community, maintaining trails, deterring vandalism, and contributing to the safety and security of the Rhus Ridge area. Their presence has been an essential asset to MidPen and the Los Altos Hills community, providing stewardship that extends far beyond the duties of a typical caretaker.

As you know, the Duveneck family donated the land where the Girouards live to MidPen in 1987, with the understanding that they would remain as residents and continue work they'd performed since 1972. Until Raye Girouard's passing in 2018, he and his family worked in partnership with MidPen, Hidden Villa, and local residents to protect and maintain the land. His son, Jeremiah Girouard, has carried on this work, ensuring that the Rhus Ridge entrance remains safe and well cared for.

After a severe winter storm damaged their home, however, rendering it uninhabitable, MidPen has refused to acknowledge the Girouards' occupancy rights. Without that, the family cannot justify investing in repairs. Instead, on January 10, 2025, MidPen issued an eviction notice, citing the home's disrepair as the reason to remove the family from the land they have cared for over five decades. This decision is not only unjust but also disregards the contributions the Girouards have made to MidPen and the greater Los Altos Hills community.

A long-term lease is a fair and reasonable solution. The Girouards are ready to invest their own resources to repair their home and continue serving as stewards of the land. Without this lease, they will lose their home, and Raye's grandson, Raylen, will also be displaced from the Los Altos Hills school district, where he receives vital special education and one-on-one support.

We, the undersigned, urge you to do the right thing. Granting the Girouards a long-term lease will ensure the preservation of Rhus Ridge by those who have dedicated their lives to its care. It will also demonstrate that MidPen values the people who have served its mission for decades.

We ask that you reconsider the eviction and allow the Girouard family to remain in their home. Their removal would not only be a loss for them but for the entire community that has benefited from their presence, protection, and stewardship.

Sincerely,