

February 27, 2013
Via electronic mail

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I respectfully urge you to award posthumously the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the late organizer, human rights hero and champion of justice, Fred Ross, Sr.

Since 1999, I have served as the President and CEO of PRBO Conservation Science (PRBO), leading efforts that reduce impacts of changes in land-use and climate on ecosystems to benefit wildlife and people. Together with PRBO's 140 scientists, we work hand-in-hand with public and private natural-resource managers to develop climate-smart, nature-based solutions, on land and at sea, from California to Antarctica.

As an honors graduate of Duke University and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and recipient of the Bay Nature 2012 Environmental Hero Award for climate change leadership, I also serve as vice chair of the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (californialcc.org) of the Department of Interior, co-founder and chair of the Bay Area Ecosystem Climate Change Consortium (baeccc.org) and on the National Wildlife Federation's Climate-Smart Conservation Team (nwf.org), among other science-management partnerships.

I first worked with Fred Ross, Sr., in the early 1980's when he trained me in his house meeting community organizing method to stop nuclear weapons proliferation. I later worked as the national Field Director for Neighbor to Neighbor implementing his uniquely effective house meeting approach in targeted, swing congressional districts and states. The result: a defeat of US funding to the Nicaraguan Contras and a peace agreement brokered by Costa Rica. Many lives were saved.

Fred Ross' innovative and extraordinarily successful organizing strategies are still being implemented today across a wide range of sectors in our society, helping communities and nature achieve resilience in our rapidly changing and increasingly challenging world.

Honoring Fred Ross Sr. would truly recognize his impressive legacy.

The late U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy said: “Fred Ross is a modern day pioneer, and history will surely record his enduring contributions to the United Farm Workers and to organized labor.”

I hope you will honor his enduring contributions by awarding him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further information.

Sincerely,

Ellie M. Cohen

Ellie Cohen, *President and CEO*

PRBO Conservation Science (affiliation purposes only)

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