



## Society of Vertebrate Paleontology

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FEIN: 06-0906643

Salvador A. del Solar Labarthe  
Minister of Culture  
Av. Javier Prado Este 2465  
San Borja  
Lima 41, Perú

24 May 2017

**Subject: IX Congreso Latinoamericano de Paleontología, 2016**

Dear Minister del Solar:

On behalf of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, we are writing to request an investigation into the organization and financing of the IX Congreso Latinoamericano de Paleontología that was held in at the Ministry of Culture building in Lima during September, 2016. It has come to our attention that serious irregularities were experienced by members of the paleontological scientific community who participated in the Congress, which not only negatively impacted them personally, but has also threatened to compromise the reputation of the Peruvian paleontological community in general.

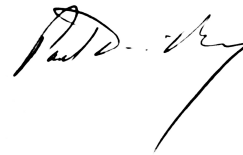
The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology exists to advance the science and education of vertebrate paleontology and to serve the common interests of all members of our discipline. With over 2,500 members from every continent except Antarctica, we are the largest professional organization of paleontologists in the world.

We are concerned about the allegations that have been made about the organization of the Congress, as well as about the abnormalities that occurred. Scheduled field trips at the Congress did not run, even though participants had paid in advance for them, and keynote speakers were not issued airline tickets and so were not able to attend the Congress. Most worryingly, allegations about the Congress President, Carlos Vildoso, head of the Instituto Peruano de Estudios en Paleovertebrados (IPEP), have been made in public at the 35<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress in Cape Town and in print in the attached paper by Gutiérrez-Marco *et al.*, 2016. This situation further concerns the vertebrate paleontological community because a representative of the Peruvian Ministry of Culture was a member of the Organizing Committee as President of the Ethics and

Regulations (“Presidente Etica y Normativa”) of the meeting. If the allegations are true, action needs to be taken to make amends to those who were financially deprived; if false, action needs to be taken to set the record straight. Either way these issues have the potential to undermine existing cordial and productive international relations among our paleontological colleagues, to hinder the advancement of paleontology in Peru, and to be detrimental for organizing or sponsoring future paleontological or scientific events in Peru. The events also have the potential to bring the Ministry of Culture into disrepute because the Congress was co-sponsored by the Ministry, the IPEP, and the Universidad de Piura.

For the sake of academic integrity and organizational transparency, we urge the Ministry of Culture to consider investigating the circumstances of the Congress and to ensure that resources were spent appropriately in advancing the mission of the Ministry of Culture and effectively promoting the reputation of Peruvian academics and science.

Sincerely yours,



P. David Polly  
President, The Society of Vertebrate  
Paleontology



Emily J. Rayfield  
Vice President, The Society of Vertebrate  
Paleontology



John A. Long  
Past President, The Society of Vertebrate  
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**Cc:** Jorge Ernesto Arrunátegui Gadea  
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