

Bennett, Jim

From: Neal Masters <mastersneal@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 9:25 AM
To: Bennett, Jim
Subject: PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001, LOG NO. PDS2015-ER-98-14-016B

Dear Mr Bennett;

I live on El Monte rd, in the affected area, so you have a right to label this as another "not-in-my backyard" rant, but I'd like to raise a few points.

First, I applaud the scope of the Environmental Impact Update Form. Once all the reviews have been done, all the issues I have, and more, will have been addressed.

What concerns me is whether the County's view of what constitutes adequate "mitigation" of those issues, agrees with mine.

El Monte Valley isn't just a relatively undeveloped area that happens to have some sand. It's an area that attracts a lot of people for its beauty, its recreational opportunities, and its "out in the country" feel, while being relatively close to town.

A sand mine at the entrance to the valley would destroy or spoil most of the attraction of the area.

Some points:

- 1) Controlling dust, particularly in light of the potential for Valley Fever, may require more water than the valley has available. Valley residents depend on their wells for their water supply, since there is no city water available. What will be the mitigation for residents whose wells go dry or are contaminated by the mining operation?
- 2) Noise is noise. No one wants to listen to rock crushers and heavy equipment in a formerly quiet valley whether it's day or night. Putting in a line of trees along the road isn't going to do much good either, because sound travels amazingly well in the valley. We were actually warned when we bought our property "Be careful what you say around here, you'd be surprised how many people can hear it!"
- 3) Traffic. I would assume that the proposed access off El Monte rd for the trucks would be down at the Hansen pond area to minimize the distance on the narrower parts of El Monte rd. but the trucks are still going to be traveling on either Lake Jennings rd. East, (steep hill) or Mapleview West, past residential areas and the high school to 67, and causing traffic delays all the way. El Capitan Reservoir is a very popular boating area, and boaters leaving the lake aren't going to appreciate coming around a corner at 45 mph and finding a sand trunk grinding through the gears at 5mph and taking up all the road.
- 4) From a personal standpoint, what mitigation can there be for living next to a strip mine for 20 years? And if a person found it intolerable and sold their property to move elsewhere, what

about the loss in property values? No one else would want to live next to a sand mine either!
Will that be mitigated?

Another issue about mitigation in general is that it doesn't seem to happen very often around here. Hanson pond, the golf course development project, and Powerlink are all examples of projects where mitigation should have happened, but didn't. If the current project goes the way of the previous projects, we can expect a shell company, to come in, make extravagant claims of how much money the holder of the mineral rights could make, and top it off with plans for the wonderful restoration work that could be done with only a fraction of the profits etc etc. . . . but then when the cream of the resource has been extracted, and the profits spent, the shell company declares bankruptcy, the holder of the mineral rights receives little or nothing, and instead of a relatively natural river bottom we will have ugly toxic pools in the bottom of ugly pits.

Pardon me for being pessimistic, but the agencies that should have been protecting our environment, haven't been doing very well by us lately.

If the country insisted that projects like this could not proceed unless there was a separate fund set up to cover the cost of a proper restoration from whatever stage the project had reached, and provide insurance to cover any contingencies that might result either now or in the future because of the project (in other words, just being conscientious and responsible) it would save a lot of grief in the future.

I guess you've figured out my take on this; I have a hard time believing that a strip-mining company that sets itself up as a river conservancy, will actually have the best interests of El Monte Valley, Lakeside, or San Diego County, as a primary goal. I don't see how it could make economic sense in a competitive industry like sand mining to take on a project that will require significantly more mitigation and a big restoration at the end, when there are other near by areas, like the parcel just up 67, that will be able to charge less for their sand because they don't have a river restoration to deal with. In general, it seems like a really dumb idea unless you happen to be a strip mining company whose plan is to make a fast buck and clear out; certainly everyone else will be the loser.

Yours truly;

Neal Masters

14817 El Monte rd.

Lakeside, CA 92040