

Attention: Jim Bennett

Date: 9.12.15

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Subject: PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001, LOG NO. PDS2015-ER-98-14-016B

Dear Mr. Bennett,

I am submitting my input and concerns about the scope of the Environmental Impact from the El Monte Sand Mining Project. I ask that my concerns be thoroughly considered in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

The El Monte Sand mining project will negatively impact the following;

#### Aesthetic Resources

1. This Project will negatively impact both Willow Rd. and El Monte Rd, as both are designated scenic roads. What happens to these designations?
2. What can the proposed project do to prevent the loss of these designations?
3. What can the county do to protect these designations?
4. What can the proposed project do to screen the visibility of the sand mine from the surrounding community?

#### Agricultural Resources

1. This can affect the Dairy ranch at the end of Willow, affecting the water table; the dust generated during the operation, Valley Fever is deadly for both Dogs, Horses. What is the effect on the Dairy Cattle?
  - a. If the Dairy cattle are affected, what will the county do?
2. As thousands of children visit this dairy ranch as an Agricultural Resource, this proposed project could negatively impact both the ranch and the visiting children. To what effect is too much?

#### Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1. Truck traffic leaving the proposed project? The volume of trucks will add noise, Gh gas emissions, etc.
2. Heavy equipment and processing equipment, what will be their gas emissions? How much will the heavy equipment reduce air quality and produce how much GH gas emissions?

## Biological Resources

1. Have all federally protected Wildlife species been identified in the valley? Per the Aug. 26 meeting, at least five species that are federally protected have not been accounted for, but it is stated that those species are in the valley, who is accounting for those missing species?
  - a. How will this federally protected wildlife be protected?
  - b. By Federal Law, these species cannot be disturbed and won't this proposed project do just that?
  - c. How will the county identify and report all the federally protected Wildlife for this scope?
2. The valley is slated as in destruction phase, who made that determination and on what basis and guidelines? What proof is offer that states the valley is in a destruction phase?
3. Will the supplemental EIR take into account the West-East habitat corridor? What happens with that corridor?
4. Are there not multiple habitat corridors, North / South, East/West, the proposed project will definitely interfere with the East/West corridor, what will be done to resolve that while the sand mine is in operation?
5. What happens to the animal species in El Monte Valley: Golden Eagles, Horned Lizards, Least Bell's Vireos (endangered and threaten), deer, bobcat, Loggerhead Shrike, red headed woodpeckers, nuthatch, coyotes, Quail, Great Horned Owls, Hummingbirds, Raptors (Hawks), wrens, Spotted Towhee's, Horned Toad, skinks, Gray fox, Doves, Bats, and the Glossy Snake, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, cooper's hawk, turkey vulture, barn owl, western screech-owl, white-tailed kite, western bluebird, acorn woodpeckers, common poorwill, coastal California gnatcatchers, rufous-crowned sparrow, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse, orange-throated whiptail, and the coastal rosy boa?
  - a. How will these species be monitored during this proposed project if the wildlife corridors are wiped out?
  - b. How will these species be protected during this proposed sand mining?
  - c. As the Least Bell's Vireos is on the endangered and threaten list, this proposed sand mine further threatens this species by destroying its territory in El Monte Valley.
  - d. The California Glossy Snake cannot be removed from its territory, and the sand mine is invading its territory.

## Cultural Resources:

1. Has a qualified archaeologist researched El Monte valley for Native American historical sites?
  - a. Is this going to be done and if not planned, shouldn't this be done?

## Geology and Soils:

### Hazards and Hazardous Materials:

1. There is a Hazardous Materials Dump/station in El Monte Valley, how is this affected by this proposed project?
2. What guidelines will be in place with the proposed sand mine and the Hazardous materials Dump
  - a. How will the Hazardous Materials Dump be protected?
3. Best Practices to contain Valley Fever is water and we are in a drought. Yet, Valley Fever is not contained with Best Practices, so wildlife, livestock, family pets, and most important, people can contract Valley Fever once it is in the air and either die or become seriously ill.
  - a. Once a person contracts Valley Fever, and if they become seriously ill, those patients are on medicine for the rest of their life. What is the County response to this?
  - b. As the cases of Valley Fever occur with the residents, how will these cases of Valley fever be monitored, reported and dealt with?
  - c. What happens if there are deaths from Valley Fever? What actions are taken then by the county?
  - d. Once cases of Valley Fever occur, what actions will the County take?
  - e. How much water will be used in this Best Practices for handling Valley Fever? What actions can we expect from the county when this practice fails and Valley Fever strikes people and animals?
    - i. Who will be monitoring the water usage for this best practice to contain Valley Fever?
    - ii. What happens to this practice if the water table drops affecting wells, septic systems, etc.?
  - f. How will the cases of Valley Fever affecting livestock and pets be monitored, reported, and dealt with? What actions can we expect from the county to prevent further spread and damage? It would be best if Valley Fever was not released in El Monte Valley to begin with.
4. How will the employees of this proposed project to be protected from Valley Fever? How will those cases be monitored, reported and dealt with?
5. With the water ponds in use, proposed, how will West Niles Virus be dealt with, monitored, contained? The County reports over 46 birds dead to West Niles this year alone, so how will this proposed project add to the spread of West Niles?
  - a. West Niles virus is deadly to horses. What will be the county's response and actions should an outbreak of West Niles occur during this operation of the sand mining?
  - b. How will the county monitor for West Niles?

### Hydrology and Water Quality: Please investigate the impacts of the following:

1. This Proposed project will have to dig new wells to provide water? Please confirm?
  - a. How many wells will this sand mine project install?
  - b. Will these wells be tested, monitored, and results reported to the public?

2. Once sand extraction activities extend below the water table, please specify everything that will happen to this water table once the extraction goes below this table. What happens to its water level of this 3<sup>rd</sup> largest aquifer/water table in San Diego county? How does this affect the quality of the water?
3. If the water table drops with this proposed project, thus dropping the production of surrounding wells, what specific steps are taken then to prevent further loss of water?
4. How will the quality of the water be monitored and how often?
5. If the water table becomes contaminated and/or wells, what steps are taken to prevent further contamination and to repair the water supply damaged?
6. How is the underground water dam of the aquifer affected? What happens to this dam? If damaged, what will be done to repair it?
7. To protect the quality of the water, What method, studies, resources, and experts are used to inspect and assure the water quality is not affected?
8. How are the wells in the valley affected?
  - a. Can the wells go dry or drop their production of water?
  - b. If the county only test wells within a ½ mile distance of the sand mine, does the county expand the tests beyond the ½ mile radius if negative results are found? What steps are then taken?
  - c. Shouldn't all wells be tested within the valley especially if the extraction extends below the water table? What about the Wells downstream?
9. How does this affect the septic systems in the valley? What tests are performed?
10. 132-acre feet of required water and ponds are needed for annual production (dust control, outgoing loads, and production equipment) of the proposed sand mine while the state and county is in a DROUGHT:
  - a. How can a resource as water already in short supply be justified to be wasted in such large quantities for a project?
11. Within this proposed sand mine, how is this water to be REPLACED as water of the U.S. a sensitive resource?
  - a. How is water taken for this project to be replaced to the groundwater table in a Drought?
12. Depleting the water table/aquifer with onsite wells in the proposed sand mine in such a volume will affect the water table thus the established wells, the habitat with its wildlife, the trees such as Mature Coast Live Oaks, California Sycamores, and Western cottonwood trees?
13. How is water at the Diary at the end of El Monte Valley affected?
14. What is the risk of Nitrates in the El Monte groundwater with mining production?
15. Will the county be monitoring for cases of Blue Babies, should high nitrates appear in the water table?
16. How does the proposed Sand Mine to work with the 404 Clean Water Act?
17. How is the Hazard Waste Dump in El Monte Valley affected by the mining productions?
18. SDSU in 2009 produce a study of the Impacts of Sand Mining, has the County referred to this study at all?

## Land Use Planning

1. This Valley is considered a scenic corridor and it provides wildlife corridors.
2. This Valley has a large network of looping and interconnecting trails for equestrians, hikers, and dog walkers.
3. While Helix Water owned this property for the proposed sand mine, Helix Water always provided Horse gates so the equestrians could ride the river bottom. Helix provided the door access to the river bottom, so if access was provided, thus permission to ride the river bottom, therefore there was no trespassing from equestrians.
4. I am the equestrian who contacted Turko files for help for equestrians trying to cross Ashwood to the River Bottom long ag. Based on that Turko Files TV segment, Helix Water and the County joined together and the equestrian crosswalk with signal lights was installed. Helix aligned the horse gates on both sides of Ashwood to improve safety of equestrians. The Turko files did a follow up segment on this event. It was a community effort by Helix, the county, and the equestrians for safe access to the river bottom from Ashwood and Pillsbury ranch.
5. There is a Pumpkin patch opened every fall off El Monte road to the public and school students.
6. Basically, everything mention above is impacted by this proposed Sand mine. Access to trails will be impacted, wildlife impacted, exposure to Valley Fever and West Niles puts the public, the Residents, the Dairy Cattle Ranch, and livestock at risk.

## Mineral Resources:

As there are already sand mines in place at both ends of Moreno Road, along 67 before Vigilante Road and 67 in Santee, Why is there a need for yet another sand mine? Only this proposed project will destroy a valley, wildlife habitat, a scenic corridor, and threaten San Diego's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest aquifer.

Noise: The proposed sand mine will be in production six days a week, along with truck traffic, there will be extensive noise.

1. How will the noise level be monitored and controlled?
2. What are the standards for the noise levels?
3. What are the limits? What happens if the limits are exceeded? What will be done then?
4. What actions can we expect from the county to protect the area, community, residents from the noise of this proposed sand mine?
5. What are the specific actions and fines to be executed by the county?
6. What recourse does the community and residents have?
7. How much will this noise impact the high school on Ashwood?

Recreation:

1. With this proposed project, the recreation will be greatly disturbed with the noise, dust, fear and risk of Valley Fever exposure, and West Niles exposure.
  - a. This will discouraged hikers, dog walkers, bird and habitat watchers, and equestrians.
2. Recreation will also be disturbed with the extreme traffic of heavy trucks that will affect Ashwood, El Monte Rd, Mapleview, Willow, and 67. El Capitan High School has its athletics teams run on Willow, Ashwood, and Mapleview.
  - a. Equestrians will have further issues trying to cross Ashwood to ride in the river bottom.  
How is that to be addressed?
3. Recreation will be affected by noise as well six days a week.
4. This proposed project will only be quiet on Sundays, and affecting Saturday recreation users.

Transportation/traffic:

1. How will the truck traffic from the sand mining merge with both the High School and Casino traffic on Ashwood? A large volume of traffic is for the Barona Casino, affecting Willow, Ashwood, and Mapleview. What does the county plan to do about this?
2. How will the truck traffic affect the road conditions in the entire area, on Ashwood, El Monte Rd., Mapleview, Willow, and Highway 67? What happens to the infrastructure of the roads subjected to the massive truck traffic proposed in this project?
3. Along with the volume of trucks from the mining, affecting high school students walking to high school, equestrian traffic on Ashwood trying to cross Ashwood to ride trails.
4. The noise the truck traffic will make along with emissions? How will that be monitor and addressed if levels are exceeded?
5. The additional traffic on El Monte Rd. will affect Bike Riders and runners.
6. What is Caltrans and CA Highway patrol input on the impact of traffic and road infrastructure on Willow, El Monte road, Ashwood, Mapleview, and Hwy 67?
7. What is the evaluation of the proposed truck traffic from the mining affecting El Capitan High School on Ashwood? What will be done to protect students?

Submitted by,

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