From:	Ana Potts
To:	Bennett, Jim; Hingtgen, Robert J
Cc:	lfwood@sandiego.gov
Subject:	CEQA comments
Date:	Monday, September 14, 2015 3:49:51 PM

SCOPING COMMENTS
From: Ana Nita-Potts
Address: 12730 Laurel Street #303, Lakeside, CA 92040
AnaPotts99@yahoo.com
September 14, 2015

Regarding : El Monte Sand Mining and Nature Preserve Project
PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2, PDS2015-RP-15-001, LOG NO. PDS2015-ER-98-14-016B
http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/Current_Projects/MUP-98-014W2.html

Dear Mr. Bennett and Mr. Hingtgen,

Impacts and concerns related to the sand mining project planned in the El Monte Valley I respectfully request for you to review:

1. There are several main issues at play, the most important being the **underground water**. Getting rid of the water in exchange for the sand in a state plagued by drought should be considered nothing less than a crime. The aquifer in the valley is the third largest in the San Diego County and supplies water to East County. Removing the natural sand filter in the underground river to create a riparian habitat will resurface that aquifer exposing it to contamination and evaporation. First of all, bringing the water to the surface will disrupt the San Diego River course, which goes from Julian to the Pacific Ocean and will create incommensurable environmental and hydrological impacts not only for the locals, but also all the way down the river where it meets the coast in Ocean Beach.

2. Then, the water will undoubtedly be **polluted** by the chemical spills caused by the hundreds of Diesel trucks operating at the site, the nitrites entering the soil and other hazardous materials used in the sand mining process. In addition to that, all the **wells** in the area will dry up, forcing the unwilling residents to request to be connected to the city water and sewage. Who is going to ensure the water quality is going to remain the same for the residents?

3. With such a huge body of water resurfaced, there is great risk for **West Nile Virus** spreading widely in the area.

4. Before that happens though, there is a very high risk of spreading **Valley Fever** way beyond Lakeside's border by stirring up huge clouds of sand. This fungus is located in the valley, usually around Native Americans' artifacts sites and it can be spread by wind. The sand miners' reps claim they will constantly water down the sand during the extraction to minimize the spread of a Valley Fever. One may wonder, where is that huge amount of water going to come from? What is more important, the sand or the public health?

5. El Monte Valley contains such lush vegetation and many **endangered species,** such as Glossy Snakes, Least Bells Vireos, Gnatcatchers and a rare butterfly found nowhere else (a recent discovery, in process to be documented). The very rich and diverse habitat of the valley was documented for the past five years with photos and videos we can provide for your consideration. Please review the impact of the sand mining on these endangered and federally protected species:

   https://www.facebook.com/download/893987294016694/Species%20in%20the%20project%20area..pdf

6. Two roads, El Monte Rd. and Willow Rd., designated as scenic corridors, flank the valley on both sides. These roads won't be scenic anymore without the scenic valley.
   These two roads connect the town of Lakeside to a very rich valley not only in historical artifacts, but also in biodiversity, which constitutes the heart of this community. Many local businesses are thriving in the valley, for example, the Van Ommering dairy farm – a place visited for instructional purposes

by thousands of kids every single year. One may wonder, what is the risk of exposing so many children to the hazard of such a big sand mining plant, not to mention the Valley Fever fungus? Moreover, many horse-boarding facilities will lose their place and their customers won't have access to any more trails in the valley.

7. The project is estimated to last from 15 to 30 years and mine approximately 500 acres of sand using around 350 Diesel trucks per day in an out of the valley. There are only two roads accessing the area: Willow Rd, which is a dirt road and El Monte Rd. which has two lanes with no room for expansion. The amount of heavy traffic on these two roads then extended to the major roads and highways in Lakeside and beyond will certainly paralyze the traffic in the area.

8. El Monte Valley is also a popular and essential part of the equestrian businesses and destroying the horse trails would greatly affect the large equestrian boarding facilities in Lakeside, known for its endless miles of trails.

9. The valley is known for its steep mountains guarding a beautiful scenic natural corridor ending into El Cajon Mountain, the biggest monolithic formation in San Diego county which can be seen from downtown San Diego. All this beauty will be forever lost for the generations to come. The sand mining project will forever destroy an area that is already in use for multiple recreational purposes: El Monte Park, the El Monte Valley and El Capitan Lake Reservoir.

Please do a study related to the above mentioned concerns. Please provide a confirmation of receipt for my letter.Thank you.

Best,
Ana Nita-Potts