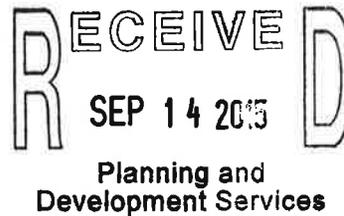


September 14, 2015



Jim Bennett
County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services

In Re: El Monte Sand Mining and Nature Preserve; PDS2015-MUP-98-014W2,
PDS2015-RP-15-001, LOG NO. PDS2015-ER-98-14-016B

Dear Mr. Bennett:

I am a resident of El Monte Valley and I am alarmed at the prospect of a sand mining operation being approved. I would like the county to address the following concerns:

1. Water- Quality and Supply

I believe the mining will impact the water supply and water quality of the valley. I would like the valley residents' wells tested on a regular basis during the sand mining operation to guarantee the water is safe to drink. I know firsthand the impact of contaminated water due to mining. I own a ranch in Kosse, Texas and the groundwater on my ranch and on the surrounding ranches contains a high level of arsenic due to contamination from nearby mining operations. Those operations were discontinued over 30 years ago, but the contaminants remained and have continued to play havoc with the water supply.

There is no financially viable option for any valley residents to connect with municipal water lines. According to the Notice of Preparation Documentation dated August 13, 2015, the project's estimated water usage will be 132 acre feet of water annually and that water would be obtained from onsite wells and ponds once the mining extends below the water table. According to my calculations, this equates to approximately 43 million gallons of water a year for the next 15-20 years. Once those onsite wells are installed, I believe the residents wells will be at a grave threat of running dry. I feel the sand mining operation should be financially responsible for providing residents water should any of our wells run dry once the sand mining wells begin operating.

2. Air Quality

Given the amount of equipment necessary to mine and transport the sand, I feel there should be continued monitoring of the air quality in the valley. The amount of diesel fumes from the 231 truckloads per day exiting the sand mine will certainly impact the air quality.

3. Valley Fever

Valley Fever spores are present in El Monte Valley and the sand mining operation increases the likelihood of those spores infecting large numbers of people, especially during Santa Ana winds. I am unsure how this threat can be mitigated but I do not relish the idea of becoming a prisoner in my own home. The county will need to address this concern. It does not matter what the odds of contracting this disease are if you are the one who is infected.

4. Wildfire Evacuation

The threat from wildfires is 365 days a year. The county will need to come up with an evacuation plan that incorporates the sand mining trucks. What will be the procedure should a wildfire break out during a weekday when the trucks are moving up and down El Monte road? There are not numerous exit options in the valley and the sand mining trucks certainly have the potential to severely impact our evacuation route.

5. Enforcement

I would like the county to consider a dedicated code enforcement officer to inspect the sand mining operation on a monthly basis to ensure the sand mining company is operating efficiently and are not cutting corners or covering up any additional pollution. This is extremely important to ensure that the equipment being used (including the transport trucks) are in good working condition and are not contaminating the ground any further with oil leaks, fuel, etc.

6. Reclamation Guarantee

I want the county to require the sand mining company to obtain a reclamation bond given by a California admitted surety company in an amount of no less than \$1,000,000.00 to ensure the mining company will complete reclamation. A surety bond is the only guarantee against the company filing bankruptcy or dissolving and disappearing leaving the valley scarred and dotted with sand pits. The bond should remain in place throughout the lifetime of this project and should only be exonerated once full reclamation has been achieved.

7. Fast Tracking

I do not believe that any part of this process should be fast tracked, nor do I think the county should rely on any past reports prepared for the golf course project as those reports are years old and this is an entirely different project.

In closing, I would like to say that despite the relative low population of El Monte valley, there are thousands of San Diego county residents who visit the valley every year for outdoor recreation including horseback riding, hiking, bicycle riding, boating and fishing at El Capitan Reservoir, camping at Lake Jennings, hang gliding, school tours of the Van Ommering Dairy (including Oma's Pumpkin Patch and the Van Ommering Christmas tree lot). These individuals will also be affected by the presence of a sand mining operation. I sincerely hope the committee members consider the impact on all of those residents of San Diego County who enjoy this beautiful valley.

Thank you for letting me express my concerns.

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