

I-300 Carolyn Richardson Owens (1)

Comment Letter I-300

Carolyn Richardson Owens
28102 Par View Court
Escondido, CA 92026

August 8, 2017

Ms. Ashley Smith
County Project Manager
Department of Planning and Development
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Newland Sierra Project

Dear Ms. Smith:

Please be advised that as a resident of Hidden Meadows I have many concerns regarding the Newland Sierra Project (hereinafter "Sierra") proposed for the hills northwest of the Deer Springs exit off Interstate 15 in the north county. About 10 years ago the County of San Diego spent approximately \$18 million to develop the County's General Plan (hereinafter "Plan") which deemed the aforementioned area as not appropriate for urban development. A major purpose of the Plan was to discourage urban sprawl by focusing new housing and infrastructure to areas closer to employment and mass transportation and away from more rural spaces. In direct opposition of this plan, Sierra proposes to construct 2135 residences, single and multi-family, with 81,000 square feet of commercial use (about the size of two North County Fair malls), along with parks, trails, roads, etc. The space is currently zoned for 99 homes. Previously, another developer proposed the Merriam Mountain Project in the same space, desiring to build 2600 homes. The County denied the project. I fail to see the difference in the two proposals. Both are in violation of the intent of the County's General Plan.

I-300-1

In order to complete Sierra, the surrounding neighborhoods, including Hidden Meadows, will be subjected to 244 weeks of grading and 5650 tons of rock crushed per day. The air and noise pollution created will have a negative impact on the people who live in Hidden Meadows. Hidden Meadows residents engage in many outdoor activities, such as walking, running, biking, golfing, and sitting outside enjoying the peace and quiet and sounds of nature, which only happens in the more rural areas of the county. The dust composites that will be in the air are not healthful and put respiratory systems at risk for decades into the future. The blasting and crushing of rocks and the movement of construction vehicles and equipment will eradicate the peace and serenity (quiet enjoyment), a covenant that actually runs with each residence in the area, of Hidden Meadows.

I-300-2

The traffic on the 15 freeway in this area is always moderate to heavy. During morning and evening rush hours the traffic on Deer Springs and Mountain Meadows Roads to get to the freeway is gridlocked. Constructing over 21 hundred new dwelling units will result in 10 million new car trips a year into the surrounding community, making a distressing situation even more unbearable. The Deer Springs/Mountain Meadows freeway interchange cannot handle the additional vehicles. While there is a proposal for reconfiguring this exchange, the Environmental Impact Report (hereinafter "EIR") for the Sierra does not significantly address the design of this interchange.

I-300-3

Comment Letters

Hidden Meadows and its surrounding communities, including the area for the proposed Sierra, are in a very high fire hazard severity zone. There is virtually one way (Mountain Meadows Road) out of Hidden Meadows in the event of a fire evacuation (this information comes from the Deer Springs Fire Safety Council evacuation preparedness exercise on July 15, 2017). Adding to the populations of these communities will further strain the evacuation routes on both sides of the 15 freeway. Gridlock during an evacuation would compromise the safety of the entire region.

I-300-4

Another crucial element to consider is the existence of diverse wildlife in the Deer Springs area. The Sierra will disrupt and displace these animals during and after the construction. Furthermore, the EIR does not address all species in the area or the impact the Sierra will have on them.

I-300-5

In addition to the above concerns, there are issues with the impact the Sierra will have on the local schools and the area's water supply, and public funding necessary for infrastructure improvements in the region. All of these issues need to be fully addressed and before any consideration can be given to the Sierra proposal.

I-300-6

Thank you for your courtesy and attention.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Richardson Owens