

I-337 Christine and Gennaro Savarese

Comment Letter I-337

From: Gennaro Savarese [mailto:gennarothebrook@msn.com]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2017 8:41 AM
To: Smith, Ashley
Subject: NEWLAND SIERRA PROPOSAL

Ms. Ashley Smith
San Diego County Dept. of Planning and Development
5510 Overland Ave, Suite 310
San Diego, A 92123

We are writing to express our personal opposition to the Newland Sierra proposed development as described in the Draft EIR and to provide some supplementary comments in addition to those contained in our HM CSG submission. We would also like to comment on your responsive acknowledgement of receipt of email submissions from our Group and our community neighbors. We all are very appreciative of your response.

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We are very concerned about this proposed development on several levels. In order of priority the first would be health and safety. **The primary and most likely threat to our safety is a fast moving wild fire, of which there have been several affecting us in the past.** In only one of these events have we been required to evacuate and we left early to avoid the rush. Obviously, we cannot comment directly about traffic later in the evacuation process but we did hear complaints about the Mountain Meadow/Center City/Champagne/Deer Springs intersection which is the only exit from Hidden Meadows and the only westbound exit from the other local communities on the east side of the I-15 corridor. Since escape to the north and/or south are likely to be blocked in a rapidly advancing Santa Ana wind fed fire this has to be considered and treated as our only emergency exit at least in terms of evaluating adequacy of capacity.

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We have observed, and we are sure the County has recorded, significant changes in traffic volume along I-15, and through the I-15/Deer Springs interchange in the past five years. Recently traffic on I-15 and Champagne Blvd has been completely stalled on several occasions due to small brush fires. With a high wind wild fire carrying embers well ahead of the primary flame front we have to consider the low probability of a north or south escape route leaving Mountain Meadow/Deer Springs intersection as our route to safety. After running the gauntlet of that intersection, the I-15 interchange, and the major Mesa Rock intersection, which is proposed as the primary exit for 2,135 new dwellings and some commercial properties we will be faced with Deer Springs Road. **If expanded to four lanes as in option B, Deer Springs is likely to deliver little improvement over its current ratings in another ten years even without this development if traffic trends continue as experienced over the past decade.** If expanded to three lanes including a continuous center turn lane as in option A, and apparently favored by Newland Sierra based on their statements over the past year, Deer Springs becomes basically a two-lane section of road requiring a merge down from four lanes at either end, **in other words a planned bottleneck in what must be considered the default emergency evacuation route for the communities on the east side of I-15.** If there is any mitigation in this plan for this situation we have missed it. Please provide us the County's most recent evaluation is this situation.

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The **second threat** to our health and welfare is the impact of the construction itself. Over a period of approximately ten years there is to be nearly constant excavation, blasting, breaking, and grinding of boulders, and moving of enormous amounts of earth, and debris from the boulders. The communities along the east side of the I-15 corridor and those immediately south of the development along Deer Springs road will be exposed to the noise, toxic atmospheric content, which has been described to us by an expert in the field, for the full ten years. All of us live downwind of the project, many within closed valleys which will trap and contain the toxic particulate matter, and the noise, and the dust for extended periods. The communities consist of a higher than average number of senior citizens, many of whom already contend with pulmonary and other health problems which most probably will be exacerbated by the effects of this project. We dealt with the dust from about four hundred houses built around the golf course in Hidden Meadows over several years. Has any real health impact analysis been conducted related to this project?

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During the time of the new home construction around the golf course in Hidden Meadows killdeer, quail, and roadrunners virtually disappeared from the area. Coyote are rarely heard nearby in this part of the Meadows any more, and bobcats have become virtually unknown in the neighborhood. The EIR speaks of wildlife impact based on footprint at completion of the project. Has any real study been done on the disruption to wildlife **during** the project construction? If so, could we get a report on their findings?

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We are in favor of smart development. This project does not meet that description on many counts. This is the first area travelers on I-15 northbound and the last for those southbound that appears unspoiled by the effects of civilization. Expanding out is the opposite of filling in. It is rugged land, requiring an enormous amount excavation and fill to make it usable. There is, and will apparently continue to be, inadequate infrastructure to support this development without severe impact on the surrounding communities. There are no nearby public transportation facilities nor any expectation of them that we are aware of. It is being plopped into the middle of a high fire risk area with questionable potential increase in fire protection. There is no industry or commercial center nearby in need of a workforce to provide jobs, which means more external vehicle trips per dwelling unit. There are no significant shopping centers, grocery stores, restaurants, or entertainment facilities in the area, which add to the number of external vehicle trips per dwelling unit. There are no schools nearby and none being provided by the developer.

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There are plenty of locations within San Diego County where dwelling units could provide housing for people without the additional cost of multiple vehicles to get to work, school, and shopping needs. Why does the County continue to allow huge development proposals to go forward where it is specifically not in compliance with the General Plan. After all of the time and money spent on the creating and approving the General Plan does the County Government not have a specific responsibility to the public to follow it?

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Regards,

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