

I-356 Natalie Shapiro

Comment Letter I-356

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Attn: Ashley Smith

Comments on the Newland Sierra DEIR

This project should not go forward for the following reasons:

Impacts on Wildlife

There is much fragmentation in the area from development, thus impacting wildlife movement corridors, and this project severely impacts remaining wildlife corridors. It sits on one of only two remaining large areas of undeveloped habitat west of Interstate 15 in a PAMA (Pre-approved Mitigation Area). The area where the project is proposed is a critical conservation corridor due to the topography (drainages and ridges), which supports wildlife movement, in all directions. Wildlife habitat within the project area, and adjacent to it, is designated as "moderate," "high," and "very high" quality by the North County MSCP's habitat evaluation model. This area is therefore a critical area for habitat connectivity. The project would split these wildlife corridors, which violates the NC MSCP's purpose of providing a regional interconnected preserve system.

Impacts on nearby communities

While the Cities of Escondido and San Marcos are close by, it is far enough from Sprinter stations that people would need to drive to these stations (as opposed to walking or bicycling). This means that the project is distant from transportation options that could alleviate traffic impacts. Interstate 15 is congested as it is-this project will exacerbate it further. The days of building sprawl in the backcountry are over. We cannot keep decimating our remaining open space and increasing traffic in areas without adequate public transportation.

Thank you,

Natalie

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