



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Los Padres National Forest

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Date: February 1, 2007

County of Santa Barbara Planning Department
Attn: Gary Kaiser
24 W. Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455

Re: Diamond Rock Sand and Gravel Mine, Santa Barbara County

Dear. Mr. Kaiser:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the proposed Diamond Rock Sand and Gravel Mine operation in the Cuyama Valley. Our concerns are related to the projected significant increases in truck traffic on State Route 33 through Los Padres National Forest.

The Chief of the Forest Service in 1995 designated the segment of SR33 through Los Padres National Forest as the "Jacinto Reyes National Forest Scenic Byway." The byway was established because of the highway corridor's outstanding scenic, cultural, historic and interpretive values. This segment of SR33 provides an exceptional motor touring opportunity, offering views and access to four congressionally designated wilderness areas and the Sespe Wild and Scenic River corridor. SR33 serves as a key access point to the national forest for recreationists from Kern, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties; it also attracts visitors from around the world. Additionally, SR33 is a State Scenic Highway. The California Scenic Highway Program serves to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways.

It is our understanding that the volume of gravel truck traffic (currently 60 vehicles per day) is expected to at least double with this proposal. In addition to the general incompatibility of gravel truck traffic with scenic byway values, the Forest Service is concerned about the following specific issues:

1. Public Safety – Public safety on SR33 is a key concern to us in our role as first responders (along with the CHP) to vehicle accidents on the highway. The highway is narrow and twisting, and contains several tunnels. The highway's design leaves little room for driver error or evasive action such as swerving to avoid rocks on the highway. Increased truck traffic may result in increased vehicle accidents.
2. Noise – "Driving for pleasure" is one of the most popular activities in Los Padres National Forest. Heavy commercial truck traffic on SR33 generates significant noise, including noise from "Jake" brakes that carries for several miles along and beyond the

