



County of Santa Barbara
Planning and Development
John Baker, Director
Dianne Meester Black, Assistant Director

January 25, 2007

John Larson, Project Manager
URS Corporation
130 Robin Hill Road, Suite 100
Santa Barbara, CA 93117

SUBJECT: Revised Draft EIR for the Proposed Diamond Rock Mine

John,

During the preparation of the Revised Draft EIR, we discussed the quality of life issue several times and agreed that it is, by nature, an entirely subjective matter based on personal opinion. Nevertheless, we wanted to avoid any possibility that the Draft EIR would have to be revised and recirculated a third time because of failure to address all of the issue areas.

During the public review period for original draft EIR, extensive public comments were received expressing concerns about increased truck traffic and associated noise, air pollution, traffic safety, traffic delays and road maintenance. An argument can be raised that the proposed project, or cumulative effect of the proposed project combined with other existing and proposed mining activities along the Highway 33 corridor, would have a significant adverse impact on quality of life in the area even if no thresholds were exceeded. Others will argue that the mining activity does not have a significant effect on quality of life, or that the quality of life impact can be mitigated to less than significant levels at some point. Hence, we believe the Revised Draft EIR erred in characterizing the impact as significant and unavoidable, as if it was absolute. The intent of the discussion was to identify and disclose a potential significant impact depending on one's personal perspective. In the Final EIR, we must correct this error and characterize the impact as potentially significant but that it may be possible to mitigate the impact to a less than significant level.

Sincerely,

Gary Kaiser, Supervising Planner
Development Review Division