

Mr. Gary Kaiser
Santa Barbara County Planning Dept.
624 W. Foster Road
Santa Maria, CA 93455

January 31, 2007
Sent via e-mail to: gkaiser@go.santa-barbara.ca.us
Sent via Fax to: (805) 934-6258 with the original
by U.S. P.S. Mail

Dear Mr. Kaiser:

Subject: Comments Concerning the Inadequacy of Project Specific Impact and Cumulative Impact Analyses Included in the Draft EIR Prepared for the Diamond Rock Sand and Gravel Mine

More mining truck traffic on Highway 33 will result in more congestion, and more congestion will result in decreased retail sales tax revenue for the City of Ojai and the County of Ventura. As you may already know, the City's financial situation has been in a precarious state and the recent loss of Ojai Valley Ford is only going to make matters worse. Again, as mining truck traffic increases, congestion will increase and shoppers will divert more and more purchases to other cities that they are in every day or at least sometime during the week. Before making a request for sales and tax revenues impact analyses (including mitigation), we would like to raise questions about the potential decline in the City's bed tax revenue. The first question is - does anyone really think that visitors and guests are going to keep coming from all over the country and Europe to a resort like the Ojai Valley Inn after it experiences a doubling to tripling of noisy, dirty, smelly mining truck traffic? Finally, does anyone really think that people who live outside the City of Ojai are going to risk driving inside the City of Ojai, Mira Monte, or Oak View to spend their retail tax dollars when they can more easily and safely spend them somewhere else?

To conclude, we would like to request (pursuant to the requirement in CEQA for considering all reasonable and feasible mitigation) that the businesses in the City of Ojai and the County of Ventura be compensated for any loss of retail sales revenue and that the City of Ojai and the County of Ventura be compensated for a proportionate loss in sales tax revenue. Because the draft EIR does not include recognition of the need to mitigate retail business impacts and sales tax impacts and all possible, reasonable, and feasible mitigation on a project specific and cumulative impact basis, the EIR for the mining project is inadequate. What we are recommending may not be familiar to you, but the model for doing this was developed over 20 years ago to mitigate the impacts of a rapidly developing offshore oil program on Ventura County — in this case, Santa Barbara County adopted a comprehensive mitigation condition in favor of Ventura County including its cities. To help prepare the special type of retail sales, retail tax, and bed tax reduction estimates (along with the appropriate per ton mitigation payments), a qualified impact and mitigation economist should be hired.



Mrs. Rosemary Beilschmidt, Acting Chair
Mira Monte Beautification Committee
1501 Orchard Drive
Ojai, CA 93023



Ralph J. Steele, Vice Chair
Mira Monte Beautification Committee
1579 Orchard Drive
Ojai, CA 93023

C: Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett and the City of Ojai