

**Murrieta Temecula Group**  
**Committee Recommendation on the**  
**Proposed Liberty Quarry Project**  
**October 20, 2009**

Granite Construction Company has proposed a 155-acre aggregate resource facility located southwest of Temecula on the San Diego County line west of I-15. The proposed project would provide up to 5 million tons per year of aggregate reserves for Southwest Riverside and Northern San Diego County. At the end of operations, Granite would return the reclaimed and re-vegetated site to open space. It is possible that after additional environmental review that the site could be developed as a raw water reservoir that could hold up to 38,000 ac-ft per year.

Granite has proposed mining and processing aggregate from the facility for up to 75 years. Finished aggregate product (sand and gravel) would be used to make base material, asphalt and concrete. Roughly half of the material would be shipped to other asphalt and concrete plants in Southwest California. Approximately 10% of the material produced at the facility would be recycled construction materials including reclaimed asphalt and concrete. While the site consists of 414 acres of land adjacent to I-15, Granite proposes to only mine 155 acres. Because of the stability of the hard rock, the ultimate mining depth would 1010' in depth.

The Liberty Quarry Committee of the Murrieta Temecula Group (MTG) has reviewed the proposed Liberty Quarry project and prepared the following Committee Report. The Committee was composed of the following MTG members that took on various responsibilities for reviewing the relevant information: G. Morrison, D. Frank, R. Ziemer, C. Burke, L. DiBernardo, D. Giese, B. Harker, O.B. Johnson, and G. Daigle.

**Committee Recommendation and Findings**

**1. Recommendation:**

- a. The Committee recommends that MTG support the approval, development and operation of the project based upon its potential economic benefits to the region and the state of California.

**1. Findings:**

- a. The "Reduced Footprint Alternative" as identified in the Draft EIR (July 20, 2009) prepared by Riverside County has less regional and traffic impacts than the "No Project" alternative
- b. The Liberty Quarry project would not have significant impacts on residents in Temecula, Fallbrook, Rainbow or DeLuz
- c. The Liberty Quarry Project would provide a critical source of local aggregate that has been identified by the State of California as both economically and environmentally beneficial.
- d. The MTG should support the approval of the "Reduced Footprint Alternative" and communicate this support to appropriate groups and the County of Riverside.

## **Riverside County Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)**

Riverside County has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project. The report is over 700 pages long with another 7,000 pages of technical appendices. The report was released to the public on July 20, 2009 which began a 4 month comment period which will end on November 23, 2009. Riverside County had several departments or agencies review and edit each of the sections of the Draft EIR before it was released to the public. In addition, Riverside County Planning engaged an independent consultant to review and edit the detailed air impact analysis as well as the air and health impact section of the report.

### **The County then looked in detail at four alternatives:**

1. No Project Alternative
2. Reduced Quarry Footprint Alternative
3. Reduced Annual Production Alternative
4. Double Butte Quarry Location

The County found (Section 6.5) that the “Reduced Footprint Alternative” is the Environmentally Superior Alternative because it would:

- Reduce water demand by employing belt presses to filter water and eliminating the sedimentation pond on the southwest side of the site.
- Reduce the quarry footprint by 20 acres and reduce aggregate reserves by 33 million tons.
- This alternative would be similar to the proposed project but would be environmentally superior in the following areas:
  - Air quality
  - Cultural resources
  - Geology and soils
  - Hazards and hazardous materials
  - Land use
  - Hydrology and water quality
  - Noise
  - Traffic and transportation
  - Utility and service systems
  - Vibration
  - Visual impacts
- Specifically, the reduced footprint alternative would meet the project objectives, have less regional air emissions and less regional traffic emissions than not building the project due to the existing situation of importing large amounts of aggregate into and through SW Riverside County.

### **Potential Impacts to Local Communities**

Riverside County directed the EIR preparer to summarize the potential, quantifiable impacts to the local communities in the area – the City of Temecula, the Community of DeLuz, the Community of Fallbrook, the Community of Rainbow and the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve. Section 4 of the Draft EIR contains this information. The conclusions from this section show that there will be no significant local impacts (air, vibration, noise, and light) on residents in these local communities.

Maybe more importantly to citizens in the area is the issue of health impacts. Section 3.2 (3.2-81 through 3.2-91) details the results of the health risk assessment. For crystalline silica, the maximum level of crystalline silica at the closest residence is 200 times lower than the state threshold. The total cancer risk from the project is one in 20 million at the property boundary. Both of these values indicate that there is virtually no health risk from the project.

### **Potential Significant and Unavoidable Impacts and Cumulative Impacts**

“Cumulatively significant” is a planning threshold based on the concept that although a project alone is not significant, if all the projects in SCAQMD were added up forever, the total could be significant. Again, it is SCAQMD's way of ensuring that every project is mitigated to the maximum.

Note: that none of the thresholds give credit for truck miles saved nor offsets in the Liberty Quarry DEIR.

Through protective measures, “potentially significant impacts”, is another planning threshold that can be mitigated to levels that are no longer considered significant. For example, in the case of Liberty Quarry, the project’s impact on noise levels could exceed established regional standards – a potentially significant impact. However, by implementing a mitigation measure that limits mining activities during the County’s defined noise nighttime hours, the impact is no longer considered significant.

- The County of Riverside looked at 103 potential impacts of the project and found that, after the recommendation of 138 different mitigation measures that 7 of the potential impacts were found to be significant. A finding of significance does not mean that the project is a health risk, dangerous or noticeable, it means that some planning level threshold has been exceeded and/or on a cumulative basis there is a significant impact that cannot be avoided. Also, in determining if the project is significant for air or traffic, the analysis did not take into account the 16.5 million truck-miles saved on I-15 in Riverside County and the associated air emission savings; the mitigation fees paid for traffic impacts; and the clean truck program that would outfit 130 trucks with new engines or diesel particulate filters.

### **Supply and Demand of Aggregate**

Section 3.9 and Appendix N of the DEIR discusses in detail the aggregate demand and supply situation in Southern California and in the Southwest Riverside County and Northern San Diego County. Much of this information is based upon research done by the Department of Conservation and Caltrans. Some of the more important facts derived from a review of this section include:

1. California uses an average of 6.7 tons per year of aggregate per capita.
2. Aggregate is defined as sand, gravel and boulders derived from geologic deposits.
3. Southern California’s supply of permitted aggregate reserves will be exhausted sometime between 2018 and 2027.
4. It takes on average 5 to 10 years of environmental review and permitting to site a new aggregate resource facility.
5. The Southwest California aggregate demand will see an 80 percent increase in construction aggregate demand, rising from almost 9 million tons per year to 16 million tons per year in 2050.

6. Hauling aggregate long distances (greater than 20 miles) can sometimes equal the cost of the aggregate.
7. Urban Crossroads performed a detailed study of the trucks importing aggregate through Riverside County, south into San Diego County and found that developing Liberty Quarry could result in a savings of 16.5 million truck-miles per year on freeways in Riverside County (Appendix K and K-1).
8. According to Caltrans (2007), additional aggregate sources that reduce the material hauling distance would have the following benefits: reduction in emissions from trucks; reduction in costs of materials; reduction of pavement deterioration; reduction in construction project costs.

### **Economic Impact**

Dr. John Husing, a noted Economist in the Inland Empire, performed a detailed economic report for the proposed project in 2007. The important findings by Dr. Husing are as follows:

1. Economic development in Southwestern Riverside and San Diego Counties are partly dependent upon a supply of sand and gravel to support highway construction linking the two areas. This is a direct benefit to the roughly one in three Temecula Valley families with a member commuting to San Diego for work.
2. In 2006, 64.4% of Riverside County's voters supported the passage of Proposition 1B which would increase transportation funding in the state.
3. It is estimated that Granite Construction Co. would directly invest \$90.9 million (2005 dollars) to ready the site.
4. Total Positive Economic Impact of Liberty Quarry:
  - a. Direct Output: \$171.5 million
  - b. Household Income Impact: \$ 18.7 million
  - c. Employment Impact: 277 jobs (99 on-site)
  - d. Highway Maintenance Savings \$5.3 million/yr.
  - e. Government Revenues:
    - i. Riverside County \$1.7 million/yr (sales/property tax)
    - ii. RCTC \$513,000/yr
    - iii. Permitting Fees \$1 million (one time)
    - iv. State of California \$6.2 million/yr (sales tax)
    - v. State of California \$3 million (royalties)