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March 24, 2011

CONTACT: Karie Reuther

(951) 304-9283

COUNTY STUDY: LIBERTY QUARRY TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC, AIR QUALITY

Liberty Quarry's central location will reduce truck traffic passing through Riverside County, which will improve air quality while fulfilling the growing demand for construction gravel and stone, report finds.

TEMECULA – Riverside County's Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), released today, concludes the County will be better off economically and environmentally with Liberty Quarry.

According to the report's findings, Liberty Quarry will dramatically reduce the need to import aggregate -- gravel and stone used to make concrete and asphalt -- from remote locations. As a result, fewer trucks will cross back and forth across the County carrying aggregate between projects and quarries outside the region. By taking these trucks off the road, Liberty Quarry will improve the region's air quality, according to the County's environmental report.

Liberty Quarry will produce construction-grade aggregate, the basic building blocks for roads, schools, hospitals and numerous other infrastructure needs. The Department of Conservation has reported that Riverside County will run out of this material in the next 10-20 years if no new sources are permitted. With local resources dwindling, much of this material is currently being imported through Riverside County to projects in Southwest Riverside and San Diego Counties.

"Right now, more than 1,200 commercial trucks are importing aggregate, traveling across Riverside County between projects and distant quarries across Southern California," said Gary Johnson, aggregate resource development manager for Granite Construction, "Liberty Quarry will provide material close to the projects that need it. That means fewer trucks traveling on local freeways, which will reduce harmful diesel emissions. While the County has exhaustively studied this project aggregate trucks have unnecessarily traveled nearly 100 million truck miles across our County. This is not sustainable."

The County's EIR finds that Liberty Quarry will take more trucks off local freeways than it will add, ultimately reducing truck traffic in the region by 16.5 million miles each year, leading to a 35,000-ton reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the removal of 216 tons of pollutants annually.

"Right now, trucks rumble through our city to deliver aggregate from quarries all over Riverside County to projects in San Diego, and then head back up Interstate 15 to reload," said Lake Elsinore City Councilmember Daryl Hickman. "Liberty Quarry's location on the county's southern border means many of these trucks will head directly south to San Diego instead of passing through Riverside County to load and unload."

Planned for an isolated location with direct access to Interstate 15, project studies find that residents in nearby Temecula won't see, hear or feel the quarry during construction or operation. Additionally, the project will provide 99 high-paying jobs and generate \$300 million in new tax revenue for Riverside County.

“Liberty Quarry is the kind of project that will help bring our county and struggling families closer to economic recovery,” noted Menifee City Councilmember John Denver. “Having better access to construction aggregate needed to build new roads, schools and businesses is critical to creating a sustainable future for Riverside County.”

According to the Department of Conservation, the price of aggregate doubles for every 30 miles it is transported, which often raises the price of public projects like schools and roads as aggregate must be trucked in from quarries outside the region.

“Right now cities like Eastvale, Riverside, and San Jacinto see hundreds of trucks each day traveling through our cities carrying aggregate south to San Diego,” said Eastvale City Councilmember Kelly Howell. “This traffic and pollution would be reduced if there was an aggregate source in Southwest Riverside County. As a soon-to-be mother, this is important to me and to the citizens of Eastvale.”

Support for the project is growing across the County as dozens of cities, chambers of commerce and civic organizations have publicly endorsed the project for its benefits to the region’s economy, traffic and air quality.

“I’ve done my research, gone on tours and read the environmental documents; I support this project because I know Liberty Quarry is good for our community. The County’s final environmental report now proves it,” noted Vince Davis, Temecula resident.

The full environmental study spans more than 8,500 pages and took six years to complete, including four months of public review and nearly two years of detailed response to public comment.

“I want to thank the County of Riverside and everyone who worked so diligently in preparing this report,” Johnson concluded. “Now that the final report is out, we hope all stakeholders will take time to review its findings and understand the significant benefits this project can provide for our region.”

The County Planning Commission will review Liberty Quarry and the FEIR findings at two hearings on April 26 and May 3, both beginning at 4 p.m. at Rancho Community Church in Temecula.

A full copy of the FEIR is available on Riverside County’s Planning Department home page, and can also be found at www.LibertyQuarryFacts.com.

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