

Granite Agrees to Cut Water Use by over 26% for Liberty Quarry Project

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Headlines call attention to a Southern California water shortage caused by recent court decisions seeking to protect sensitive species in Northern California. Less water in the Bay Delta area of Northern California means less water available for import and recharge in Southwest California, prompting some water districts to cut back on water to users by 10% and increase water rates.

Granite Construction has proposed the Liberty Quarry site in Southwest Riverside County on 414 acres of land. If approved by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, Liberty Quarry would be able to provide up to 5 million tons of aggregate for over 75 years. This amount of aggregate could serve the needs of 714,286 people each year.

Granite originally proposed using 500 ac-ft of water per year for making concrete, washing the aggregate, dust control, and other operational/vegetative use.

Because of the concerns about the potential availability of water in Southern California, Granite has identified alternate production and operation procedures that will reduce on site water use by 26%. Increased and expanded use of recycled water and new technology will reduce the amount of water used from 500 acre-feet to 370 acre-feet annually.

Liberty Quarry has received confirmation of available water supply to serve the project from Western Municipal Water District the project has no greater priority for water than any other user in the region. Like all water users, the project will still be subject to cutbacks or reductions if Western Municipal Water District deems it necessary. If, for any reason, water is not available for normal operations and fire control, then Granite will cutback or halt operations of the quarry.

Annual Water Use Comparison of Projects		
Project or Use	Acre-Feet	Feet of Water
Liberty Quarry (414 acres)	370 ac-ft	0.89 ft
18-hole Golf Course (350 acres)	1,120 ac-ft	3.20 ft
Avocado farming (100 acres)	500 ac-ft	5.00 ft
Citrus farming (100 acres)	400 ac-ft	4.00 ft
Residential (500 homes - 200 acres)	400 ac -ft	2.00 ft

(over)

Natural resources like water and aggregate are critical to California's growth, development and quality of life. Both public and private sectors rely on access to an adequate supply of these resources at an affordable cost to maintain needed public infrastructure and services. For many years, Southern California has relied on a steady supply of water imported from Northern California to fuel growth and maintain quality of life.

Significant and sustained reductions in the amount of water available for import will have far reaching consequences for Southwest California that are yet to be fully defined.

But there are also important lessons in the water supply equation for those dealing with the aggregate resources crisis. Reliance on supply from distant sources comes with significant risks as well as increased costs—unforeseen changes in access and availability can threaten our ability to protect and maintain our quality of life, growth and development.

In the case of aggregate, importing material from distant sources brings both added transportation costs as well as environmental impacts in the form of increased air emissions, traffic and road repair. Aggregate resource facilities located closer to where the demand exists mitigates the supply risk and reduces the transportation costs and environmental impacts of importing material from distant sources.