

FORUM: Quarry foes' facts inaccurate

By GERALD L. SUMMERS -- Temecula | Posted: Thursday, June 3, 2010 12:01 am

Making public policy is a serious matter. It requires elected officials to consider all facts and balance them against the costs and benefits of any proposed project. When a hotly contested issue comes along, such as the Liberty Quarry project, they face demands to ignore both.

Riverside County is currently in a state of financial crisis. Pensions may be cut; teachers, firefighters and police officers terminated; and workdays at public institutions reduced.

According to Granite Construction, the quarry will provide \$343 million in taxes and fees to local governments. In addition, it will dramatically cut the costs of future public and private construction projects by shortening the distance base materials will have to be transported. The cost of transporting aggregate roughly doubles every 40 miles. If it has to come from Corona, freeway and rail projects in Southwest Riverside County and North San Diego County could become untenable.

Those opposing this project have been publishing grossly inaccurate facts about it all. Even worse are the scare tactics. After my son-in-law, a Granite safety supervisor, received a nasty note on his truck on Easter, blaming him for the corporate decision to build the quarry, I was reminded of the Vietnam-era radicals who spit on soldiers returning from the war. They did not start the war, but it made no difference to the opponents.

After that event, I asked for a tour of the project area and cross-examined the officers in charge. I found them to be honest and forthright with no attempt to gloss over the issues, and prepared to answer all of my questions. It soon became apparent that the people opposing this thing are out to lunch.

The quarry itself will be three miles from Temecula behind a large, solid granite mountain. It will not be visible to anyone in the city, and vibrations transmitted through the granite will be minimal. Unlike the bombs of Camp Pendleton, the explosives will be set off underground, not in the air. It is also not going to be a "mega-mine" as claimed, but will take up approximately 155 acres, not 455. All the batch plants will be contained inside buildings with dust and fume controls.

The project is not going to impinge on the ecological reserve or the river, which are a mile away. This is not Yosemite Park, but a brushy area set aside for study, not management or tourism. The project will actually help by providing transit access for larger animals.

There might be a minor dust problem if Granite does not do its job properly and the EPA fails to monitor; but it won't compare to dust problems housing construction has presented until recently. Saying it is going to harm children, cause earthquakes and destroy vineyards is baseless nonsense.

Elected officials need to determine the true facts for themselves and weigh the benefits against them. I expect they will do the right thing, for in this area, they usually do.

GERALD L. SUMMERS lives in Temecula.

1 Comment



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[Clarity](#) said on: June 3, 2010, 1:15 am

Just because this horrible proposed quarry is called "Liberty" does not mean you can compare Granite Construction to the U.S. military! For shame, for shame! -- "After my son-in-law, a Granite safety supervisor, received a nasty note on his truck on Easter, blaming him for the corporate decision to build the quarry, I was reminded of the Vietnam-era radicals who spit on soldiers returning from the war." -- That is a distortion of facts and disrespectful to the military. Boo, hiss!