



Ruslan Bratan <rbratan@amadorgov.org>

Pilgrim Rock Quarry Proposal - Full ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW Needed

1 message

David Zic <davidzic@icloud.com>

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To: Ruslan Bratan <rbratan@amadorgov.org>

Cc: CBeatty@amadorgov.org

We are addressing this letter to the Amador County Planning Department with regards to the proposed Pilgrim Rock Quarry. When we were first approached by the applicant, RA Home Investments, with regards to the project, it was in reference to the need of changing the access point to the property (the easement with Hope Foundation) that we all use. Subsequently, we have come to realize that many additional details have come to light that require our intervention in the decision making process on this project.

Whispering Pines Christian School is a K-8 elementary & middle school located at [240 State Hwy 16](#), very close to where the proposed mine would be operating. On the proposed map there is only 0.6 miles between the main school building and the quarry operations. Most of our parents send their children to this school specifically because it is in a rural setting with opportunities to learn in nature. Parents take their children away from city environments knowing that they are sending them to a place as free from pollution as possible. As we have come to know of the project, a substantial number of concerns have led parents to reconsider sending their children to the school if the mine and all of its pollution will be present right next door. This will have a substantial impact on our business model. If we have sufficient parents pull out, we will not be able to meet our operating expenses and would need to close the school. The only way we can see forward then is to ensure that we have ALL the information to make good decisions on these environmental concerns. **WE ARE THUS REQUESTING A FULL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REVIEW** so that we know what will actually be happening during the four decades the mine will be operating. Even if the land was restored to some semblance of usability in the future the school cannot go on hold for four decades waiting till things improved.

Had the application given us these things we could have addressed them, but the 54 pages of the attachment we received are very light on details of what we can expect. We need a proper environmental review to know what will be happening. We are a country school with groups of children outside all the time from break times to agriculture classes to physical education classes. They cannot be exposed to the particulate matter that will now be right beside them. Page 7 of the "Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment" states that because of the wind patterns in this area it is possible that they will exacerbate "pollution levels in the area and increase the likelihood of violating federal and state air quality standards." And in any case, the paragraph indicates any removal of particulate matter would occur in the evening and night hours, meaning that it sits in the air right during school hours. Page 10 of the assessment raises even more concerns about the air pollutants from this project, including stating that these can "cause long-term health effects such as cancer, birth defects, neurological damage, asthma, bronchitis, or genetic damage, or short-term acute effects such as eye watering, respiratory irritation (a cough), runny nose, throat pain, and headaches." And the little air quality data provided is four years old. With all the changes we have had in the last four years it is even more imperative that a full environmental impact review be done.

Page 11 of the "Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment" states that the quarry will produce particulate matter that can harm sensitive groups and specifically mentions schools as having sensitive populations to this air pollution. As a school board then we must stress that this issue be fully understood to know the impact of a quarry that is only half a mile from the school, right on the adjoining property. As it states, schools are "considered sensitive receptors, as children are present for extended durations and engage in regular outdoor activities."

The water supply to the school is also an issue. We invested heavily in building the school and adjoining auditorium. The current well is set to 60 feet. We understand from the application that the mining will be much deeper and will impact the water table (never mind the environmental impact to the water supply) with the possibility of losing our water. If that should happen, who would be responsible to ensure that our current water supply is not impacted?

In addition to the environmental concerns we have major noise and traffic concerns. The hours of operation in the application directly coincide with hours of operation of the school. Page 4 of the "Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Assessment" states that the machines will be operating from 6am to 6pm Monday through Saturday. The proximity to the school makes noise pollution a serious concern. The same page states that BLASTING will occur twice a week from 11:30am to 2:30pm. That is more than half the school day for two of the five school days. How will the children learn successfully during the blasting times?

The operating hours also mean that the single access point to the property will have many trucks waiting to get onto Highway 16 at the same time as our buses and bringing students in and then taking them home. This will add substantial travel time to the children in the bus. And since Highway 16 is a single lane this will have a massive impact on the traffic patterns for those who use 16, which is the main artery from Amador to Sacramento. This is already a difficult situation which would be greatly worsened by so many trucks per day. **WE ARE THUS REQUESTING A FULL CAL-TRANS TRAFFIC STUDY** so that all those who use Hwy 16 as a main access road, including the Rancho Murieta community, will know the impact to travel times.

As we received the proposal only recently, and we are still missing so much environmental and other impact information, we ask you to assist us in getting this information. This project should not be able to proceed without a full environmental impact review.

Sincerely,

David Zic, Chairman
WPCS BoardNancy Fountain, Principal
WPCS