



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Date: July 31, 2024

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

Subject: **Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Lone Quarry Expansion Project**

Lead Agency: Amador County

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Purpose of Notice

Amador County (County), as the Lead Agency, is evaluating the Lone Quarry Expansion Project (Project), which proposes to expand the existing footprint and depth of the existing Lone Quarry to access additional rock reserves. The Lone Quarry has an approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP; UP-89) and Reclamation Plan for mining, processing, and offsite material shipment through 2075. This expansion requires an amended CUP and an amended Reclamation Plan to allow the proposed expanded mining area and additional stockpiling area(s). The County has completed preparation of a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), and Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CEQA Guidelines). The County has determined that an EIR is required for the Project and prepared this Notice of Availability (NOA) pursuant to Section 15060(d) of the CEQA Guidelines.

The purpose of an EIR is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project. The EIR for the proposed project has been prepared and processed in accordance with CEQA and includes the following:

- A summary of the project;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental setting, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures for the project;
- Alternatives to the project as proposed; and
- Environmental consequences, including (a) any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; (b) any significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; (c) the growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and (d) cumulative impacts.

Project Location and Setting

The project site is located at 1900 California Highway 104, approximately three miles west of the city of Lone, in unincorporated Amador County, California. The project site is within Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 005-080-020-000 and is accessed from a private driveway off State Route (SR) 104, just south of where Michigan Bar Road meets SR 104.

The project site is located within the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Topography consists of gently to moderately undulating hills and swales, circling the existing quarry area in the center of the site. The project site is predominated by mining and processing facilities associated with the existing quarry operation which include material stripping, drilling, blasting, breaking, crushing, transporting, storage, loading, and stockpiling. Mining currently occurs in one main quarry in the central portion of the site. Undeveloped portions of the site are left as open space and are predominantly non-native annual grasslands with patches of oak woodland, interspersed seasonal wetlands, and water features. Surrounding properties are undeveloped open space or are developed for agriculture, industrial, low density residential, or commercial uses.

Project Summary

SGI proposes to expand the existing footprint and depth of Lone Quarry to access additional rock reserves. The quarry would continue to be developed consistent with current approved operations. Generally, the quarry would continue to be created through successively deeper cuts (levels) in the rock until the design depth is reached. After the expansion, the quarry's total surface disturbance would have increased from approximately 56 acres to approximately 136 acres and the depth would be approximately 280 feet below mean sea level (msl), compared to 325 above msl under existing conditions. The quarry expansion would require additional stockpile area for storing the overburden soil and cap rock that would be excavated to gain access to the underlying hardrock. The stockpile area's total surface disturbance would be approximately 86 acres and have a maximum elevation of 560 feet msl. The project does not propose an increase in the current rates of production at the quarry or changes to other operations.

Potential Environmental Effects

The EIR describes existing environmental resources and current conditions on the project site, evaluates the environmental impacts of implementing the proposed Lone Quarry Expansion Project, and, where applicable, identifies feasible mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts. No significant and unavoidable environmental impacts were identified in the EIR. The EIR also evaluates alternatives to the Project that meet most of the project objectives and reduce at least one significant Project impact. The analysis focuses on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental impacts that could result from Project implementation. Based on the initial study, and comments received during the scoping period, the following environmental topics are addressed in this Draft EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources

Project Approvals

For the purposes of CEQA, the term "Responsible Agency" includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the Project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15381). Discretionary approval power may include such actions as issuance of a permit or authorization.

As lead agency for the proposed project, the County is primarily responsible for the approvals required for the proposed project. The primary approvals being sought are an amended use permit and reclamation

plan amendment. The County will also need to certify the environmental impact report and adopt findings of fact and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. In addition to County approvals, other permits and approvals may be required from the following Responsible Agencies:

- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Section 7 consultation and incidental take statement
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Clean Water Act Section 404 permit
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife: 2081 Permit and 1600 Agreement

Public Review Process

Although CEQA does not require formal hearings at any stage of the environmental review process (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15202[a]), it does encourage “wide public involvement, formal and informal...in order to receive and evaluate public reactions to environmental issues” (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15201) and requires the lead agency to provide the public with the opportunity to provide comments. The County, as lead agency, circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR (SCH # 2021090273) for the proposed project on September 15, 2021. The NOP was distributed for a 30-day comment period that ended on October 5, 2021. In addition, the County held a public scoping meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2021, to solicit input on the scope and focus of the EIR. Comments received on the NOP and during the public scoping meeting were considered in the preparation of the EIR. The DEIR incorporates public and agency responses to the NOP. Like the NOP, the Draft EIR is being circulated for review and comment by appropriate agencies, as well as organizations and individuals who have requested notification.

In accordance with Section 15205(d) of the CEQA Guidelines, the County has scheduled a 45-day public review period for the DEIR, beginning August 6, 2024, and ending on September 19, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Within that 45-day period, the County will hold one public hearing to request comments on the Draft EIR on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the County Administration Center, Board Chambers, 810 Court Street, Jackson, CA 95642.

The Draft EIR is available for review during normal business hours at the following location(s):

- Amador County Public Library 530 Sutter St, Jackson, CA 95642
- Pioneer Branch Public Library 25070 Buckhorn Ridge Rd, Pioneer, CA 95666
- Pine Grove Branch Public Library Located in Town Hall, 19889 Hwy 88 Pine Grove, CA 95665
- Lone Public Library 25 E Main St, Lone, CA 95640
- Amador County Planning Department at 810 Court Street, Jackson, CA 95642

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed, call the Planning Department at (209) 223-6380. Comments must be mailed to Chuck Beatty at the above address or emailed to: planning@amadorgov.org.

Following the close of the public review period for the Draft EIR, the County will prepare a final EIR, incorporating all comments received during the public comment period, for consideration by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors, at a date for which notice shall be provided. As required by CEQA (Cal. Public Resources Code Section 21092.5), the final EIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, will be available at least ten days prior to certification of the EIR.