

Gary H. McCowen

(51)

April 13th, 2016

rec: 4/14/16

Ms. Amy Eschberger
Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety
1313 Sherman Street, Room 215
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Eschberger,

We recently received notice that Transit Mix Concrete Company (a subsidiary of Continental Materials Corporation, a non-resident entity based in Chicago, IL) has applied for DRMS Permit No. M-2016-010 to open a new quarry on Hitch Rack Ranch near Colorado Springs, Colorado.

On March 2nd, Mr. Jerry Schnabel of Transit Mix Concrete Co., presented the quarry plan to the property owners and residents along Highway 115. No one in attendance expressed support for the quarry.

As a committee comprised of property owners along Southwest Highway 115 that encompasses over 250 properties, including the Turkey Canyon Ranch (TCR) Homeowners Association (HOA), the Pinons of TCR HOA, Highlands of TCR HOA, Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood Association, Eagle's Nest Association, the Ridgewood Estates HOA and property owners within the former Bauer Ranch, the committee unanimously objects to Transit Mix Concrete Company's proposal for the following reasons:

1. Transit Mix's proposal to open and operate a quarry in this area does not comply with El Paso County's *Southwest Highway 115 Development Plan*.

2. There are already three quarries in operation along a five mile stretch of Highway 115. The Transit Mix proposal would make it four quarries within eight miles of roadway that provides no alternative routes for residents.

3. Little Turkey Creek Road is the sole access road for the home and property owners in the Eagle's Nest development located to the west of the proposed quarry operations area. Likewise, the road that runs along Deadman's Creek is the sole access road for those property owners of the former Bauer Ranch area located to the north of the quarry area. Blasting and quarry operations will deny or inhibit these property owners access to their homes and properties.

4. Blasting operations and excavation will generate landslides affecting access along Little Turkey Creek Road.

5. Despite claims made in Transit Mix's application, long term blasting operations will impact wells, the underlying water table, and water quality. The President of Transit Mix Concrete Co. personally told one resident that he would feel the effects of blasting at his home. Additionally, excavation and the removal of vegetation in the quarry areas will exacerbate flash flooding and contaminate runoff along Little Turkey Creek. Potential fuel spills, use of herbicides to clear noxious weeds and other contaminate run off will impact wells located near the creek. The data in Transit Mix's application for the 100 year, 24 hour and 10 year, 24 hour storms is not accurate for the proposed mining area and, therefore, the proposed mitigation measures are inadequate.

6. Any industrial activity in this area increases the risk of wildfire which, is the number one threat to the people and properties along SW Highway 115. It is interesting that Transit Mix's application addresses hurricanes in the Emergency Action Plan but does not address wildfires.

7. The proposed quarry area is a part of the The Nature Conservancy of Colorado's *Aiken Canyon Potential Conservation Area* and identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program as a B2 site (Very high significance). The site is mapped by the US Fish and Wildlife

Service as Critical Habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl, a federal and state listed threatened species. Wildlife (elk, deer, black bear, bobcat, mountain lion, wild turkey, numerous other bird species and animals) will be dispersed as a result of blasting operations, heavy equipment used for mining, truck traffic and loss of habitat. The statement in Transit Mix's application "*The temporary loss of habitat would not be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any wildlife species in the area or cause a permanent change in abundance*" is ill-considered at best, as loss of habitat poses the greatest threat to species.

8. Air quality will be severely degraded. A review of several studies indicate that blasting and excavation operations produce silica dust and other particulate matter that are suspended in the air over long periods. Emissions from thousands of truck trips per year used to haul aggregate from the pits will further degrade air quality. Persistent silica dust, particulate matter and engine emissions present an unacceptable health hazard to residents in the area. Transit Mix's application does not adequately address this issue.

9. Noise will be persistent. Noise produced by blasting, excavation machinery and truck traffic will travel up and down Little Turkey Creek canyon and Deadman Creek canyon to residents along Little Turkey Creek Road and in Red Rock Valley. Decibel studies are incomplete and impacts are not addressed in the application.

10. While Transit Mix proposes to shield views of the quarry from Highway 115, there will be views of the quarry from several properties in the area. Views of the quarry will have a negative economic and aesthetic impact on property owners.

Mr. Schnabel admitted that Transit Mix has been studying this project for two and one half years. The committee and property owners have only been aware of the quarry proposal since approximately March 2nd, 2016. Obviously, we are at a severe disadvantage in that we have only a short time to review the 800 plus page Transit Mix application, consult with several government agencies, other organizations and subject matter experts in order to analyze the impacts of a mining operation in this neighborhood. The ten points listed above provide a snapshot of the issues that require detailed study, review and analysis. While we will continue to research the technical aspects and analyze the adverse impacts in greater detail, we hope that the Colorado DRMS will acknowledge our limited ability to do so within time constraints.

Respectfully,



G.K. McCowen
On behalf of the Highway 115 Citizens Advisory Committee

3070 Little Turkey Creek Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80926
Phone: (719) 352-1519

Highway 115 Citizens Advisory Committee:

Mr. Steve Firks

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Phone: (719) 576-0321

Mr. Chris Burnell

President Turkey Canyon Ranch Homeowners Association

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Mr. Mark McClurg

President, Highlands of Turkey Canon Ranch Homeowners Association

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Mr. Reece Eddy

President, Ridgewood Estates Homeowners Association

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Phone: (719) 235-6414

Copy to:

Congressman Doug Lamborn, U.S. House of Representatives, Colorado's Fifth District

1125 Kelly Johnson Blvd., #330, Colorado Springs, CO 80920

Senator Kevin Grantham, Colorado State Senator, District 2

200 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203

Representative Lois Landgraf, Colorado State Representative, District 21

200 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203



STATE OF
COLORADO

Eschberger - DNR, Amy <amy.eschberger@state.co.us>

Letter of objection M2016010

1 message

Kris and Anita McCowen <gkmccowen@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 14, 2016 at 10:20 AM

To: amy.eschberger@state.co.us

Dear Ms. Eschberger,
Please find attached a letter from the Highway 115 Citizens Advisory Committee objecting to Transit Mix Concrete Company's application to develop a quarry on Hltch Rack Ranch.

Respectfully,
Gary K. McCowen

3070 Little Turkey Creek Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80926
(719) 352-1519



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