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Lonnie T. Rogers

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March 15, 2016

DIVISION OF RECLAMATION
MINING AND SAFETY

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

opposition letter

Ms. Amy Eschberger:

The proposed Reclamation and Mining development at Hitch Rack Ranch; submitted by Transit Mix Concrete Company, Permit No. 2016010, would bring a large-scale aggregate mining development unnecessarily close, and abutting in at least two areas, to residential, [A-5] neighborhoods. Quarry development brings significant, *long-term* consequences to the environment, public health, safety, and well-being of the effected and adjoining neighborhoods due to: substantially increased truck traffic, dust, and noise pollution, to an area that is known for its strapped natural resources - water, and highest fire danger area. All the while, juxtaposed to the area's unparalleled natural beauty, abundant wildlife, wildlife habitats, and wildlife migratory trails, make this development both undesirable and unsustainable. As a resident of Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood, I cannot support this development and; therefore, opposed to the development for the following reasons:

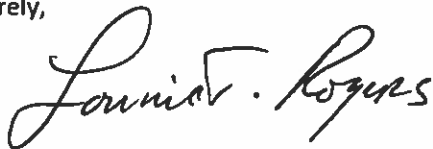
- Quarrying requires drilling and blasting with explosives, which create vibrations, noise, and dust. Once this process is completed, rock crushing machines crush the rock, conveyor belt machines move the rock around the processing plant; trucks are loaded and unloaded. The process and heavy machinery required to mine, is intrusive and creates significant noise and air pollution; thus having a direct impact on the surrounding areas and community.
- Air quality is compromised and diminished by the fugitive dust associated with aggregate mining. Dust generated by mining often contains silica, a common naturally occurring crystal found in most rock beds. Prolonged exposure to silica may result in silicosis. According the Centers for Disease Control, "[s]ilicosis is a disabling, nonreversible and sometimes fatal lung disease caused by over exposure to respirable crystalline silica... Over exposure to dust that contains microscopic particles of crystalline silica can cause scar tissue to form in the lungs, which reduces lung's ability to extract oxygen from the air we breathe." In addition to silicosis, inhalation of crystalline silica particles has been associated with other diseases, such as bronchitis and tuberculosis. This is a health issue for the abutting and nearby residential home owners and their livestock.
- The proposed quarry will create increased truck traffic by approximately 624 trucks per day, in addition to the existing truck traffic from the three operating quarries. This will create traffic

hazards detrimental to the safety of County residents as well as the bicyclist and motor bike clubs and individual "bikers" who use the 115 Southwestern Corridor as a major thoroughfare due to the area's geographic and aesthetic appeal.

- The Bauer Ranch and Eagle's Nest neighborhoods have one entrance and one exit rendering them land locked in the event of fire, traffic accident, blasting accident, landslides due to blasting, etc.
- Currently there are three existing quarries within an 8 mile radius; these quarries are currently operating at half their capacity. A better plan; and a plan that would have less impact to the community and surrounding area would be to expand the existing quarries. This would also be consistent with our Master Plan – Southwestern/Highway 115 Comprehensive Plan.
- Wildlife, wildlife habitats, wildlife migratory paths and biodiversity will be lost. An environmental study needs to be completed, rather than take the word of the applicant, that there are no endangered species located on the land or nearby lands. The proposed quarry site could be in violation of the Federal and State Endangered Species Act. The Mexican Spotted Owl, "Strix occidentalis lucida", is State and federally threatened, and has been identified in the Southwestern/Highway 115 Corridor.
- Moving dirt and extracting rock from the ground alters the flow of water runoff. The abutting neighborhoods depend strictly on well water supplies for all their water needs. There is potential for well contamination and/or damage, or complete loss from nearby blasting, contamination from blowing dust, and water runoff. Additionally, the heavy equipment necessary for quarrying, and that uses gasoline, diesel, oil and transmission fluids; can potentially leak these fluids. Small amounts to larger spills can contaminate 100' to 1000's of gallons of ground water.

Quarrying requires heavy equipment, blasting, drilling, earthmoving, all of which create noise and dust, and, would certainly diminish the quality of life and well-being of the adjacent land owners and surrounding area. Southwestern/Highway 115 Corridor's unparalleled natural beauty will be compromised and the landscape densely populated with quarries and their side effects. The 115 Southwestern Highway area is currently taxed by the activities and traffic associated with Fort Carson, Cheyenne Mountain State Park, RV Parks, and privately owned parks opened to the public, within the surrounding area. Protection of the land, environment, and public health, safety, and wellbeing is consistent with my constitutional rights. In alliance with the "Highway 115 Citizen's Advisory Committee", the citizens, and the fellow neighborhoods along the corridor, I am opposed to the quarry development.

Sincerely,



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