



Letter of Objection for Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood Association

1 message

Sara Harper <sara@harpercpa.com>
To: amy.eschberger@state.co.us

Tue, Dec 19, 2017 at 6:28 PM

Amy,

Attached is Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood Association's letter of objection for Transit Mix 112c Reclamation Permit Application No. M2017-49.


Thank you, Sara Harper



3 East Ramona Avenue
Colorado Springs CO 80905
[719 226-6746](tel:7192266746) voice
[719 226-8063](tel:7192268063) fax

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RED ROCK VALLEY ESTATES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

December 1, 2017

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

RE: LETTER OF OBJECTION - Transit Mix 112c Reclamation Permit Application No. M2017-049

Ms. Eschberger,

Transit Mix Concrete Company's new mining application is concurrent with their Judicial Review of the MLRB's decision to deny their first application. The new permit [Permit No. M2017-049] is scaled down from approximately 400 acres to approximately 200 acres. Transit Mix is banking on this scaled-down version being more appealing, and thus harder for the MLRB to deny. Their assertion is that smaller means less impact. However, the impacts to us as a community are not scaled-down the impacts are the same – no matter the size. The impacts to our water supply, easement rights, wildlife, truck traffic, remain the same. Unfortunately, if Transit Mix gets "their foot in the door", they will likely file another application for expansion. One would have to look long and hard to find an example of an expansion denial. Transit Mix has always had the 400 acres in their purview and an application for expansion will be the next battle. In the last two-day hearing, it was stated, "they were hoping this would be an exemplary quarry", given the importance of the property location and property issues associated with this quarry; this notion is scary. The proposed HRRQ is an example of where a quarry should *never* be placed. Transit Mix has not proven they have the "legal right of entry"; therefore, approving a permit on a property that does not definitively have legal access to initiate mining operations would be a waste of money, resources, and everyone's time. Don't forget **WE** the property owners, are up against a *large* corporation that apparently has unlimited resources available and is willing to do whatever it takes to get what they want, even if it means destroying the State's treasures, homeowner's property values, water, and property rights.

Transit Mix has lobbied Colorado State Representatives, City Council members, companies, and individuals to go up against us as individual landowners/homeowners – we the residents of El Paso County clearly have the most to lose. Their lobbying efforts have spread incorrect and misleading information in the process, promising to close the PikeView Quarry early, move their North Batch Station out of the City in a Quid Pro Quo political "favor" to help the City rid itself of the eye sore known as "Transit Mix's North Batch Station". The truth is the PikeView Quarry is already closed and in the "reclamation phase" due to its unstableness from over blasting. Did you know there is NO shortage of gravel now or in the near future in Colorado Springs? There are three existing, working quarries within a

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5 mile radius of the proposed Hitch Rack Ranch Quarry with huge rock reserves, in excess of a billion tons, and the capability of expansion. The Black Canyon (Synder) Quarry has not been actively mined in years; reclamation could have started years ago? Transit Mix has been planning to move the transfer station out of Colorado Springs regardless of the outcome of the 1st or 2nd Mining Application on the Hitch Rack Ranch. What is really going on is that Transit Mix wants what they want, the quarry would position a large, Chicago-based company for future growth and expansion, and lock up Transit Mix's future salability. Transit Mix is trying to create a need when there is none: the net effect to Colorado Springs is in reality **zero**. This is concerning, especially in light of the seriousness of the potential impacts it will have, not just to El Paso County residents, but to anyone who travels, camps, or enjoys the coveted Highway 115 Corridor.

The proposed quarry will directly impact the historical Hitch Rack Ranch and surrounding properties, most notably the Aiken Canyon Preserve's 1,600 acres, the Beaver Creek Wilderness study area, and the Ingersoll Ranch. The Aiken Canyon Preserve is protected by the Nature Conservancy due to its high-quality foothills ecosystem: wildlife, wildlife migratory trails, and a treasure trove of plant life. This rare combination of plant and wildlife lead to the Colorado Natural Heritage Program to deem the Aiken Canyon Preserve as "B2 Significance". Furthermore, The Aiken Canyon Preserve is one of the open spaces that helps draw 1.35 billion dollars in tourism to the State of Colorado and what makes Colorado, Colorado – "diverse geography, from alpine mountains, arid planes and deserts with huge dunes, deep canyons, sand stone, and granite rock formations, rivers, lakes, and lush forests" [Wikipedia].

As a neighborhood, we depend solely on wells for our water supply. Our wells are part of a "fractured water system", in simple terms, this means that blasting and drilling is detrimental because these fractures are permanently disrupted during the blasting, drilling, and dirt/rock removal process, thus potentially destroying our water supply permanently - forever. There is substantial, scientific evidence to support this claim. This was presented at the first hearing and the Board concurred, nothing about this application minimizes the threat to our water supply, or the threat to Little Turkey Creek contamination from runoff, or spilled contaminants. Any drop in our water table could be detrimental to our water supply.

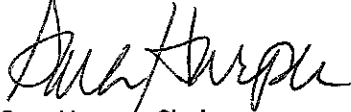
Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood Association strongly objects to the second mining permit due to the numerous, threatening issues presented by this application. Neighborhoods are at the core of our social structure; essential to the well-being, health, and safety of its residents. "A neighborhood has direct and immediate effect on value. A neighborhood is defined by the geographical area such as natural, man-made, or political boundaries and is established by a commonality based on land use, types and ages of buildings, population, the desire for homogeneity or similar factors. Other indicators to determine a neighborhood are social, environmental, economic, and governmental forces". [El Paso County] Much is invested in our neighborhoods, arguably the biggest monetary and personal investment a person makes in their lifetime. The Hitch Rack Ranch Quarry proposal places a large-scale, industrial aggregate mining development into an existing neighborhood zoned A5 Agricultural, which is not allowed in A5 zoning; therefore, requiring a Special Use Permit. If this quarry is allowed, residents'

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access to *their* homes will be blocked during blasting for up to one and a half hours at a time. Blasting will occur three times a week. Additionally, this will be a threat to the public health, safety, and well-being of the affected and adjoining neighborhoods due to the increased truck traffic, dust and noise pollution.

As you are aware, this quarry application has become quite contentious and political. As a neighborhood association, we are bound and committed to protecting our water, properties, property values, safety, and wellbeing. This application does not minimize the issues of the first application which you denied.

On Behalf of the Red Rock Valley Estates Neighborhood Association,



Sara Harper, Chairwoman



Kathie Rawson, Vice Chairwoman