

STATE OF
COLORADO

Lennberg - DNR, Patrick <patrick.lennberg@state.co.us>

M1986123 - Kirtright Pit Comment/Dissent

Chase Bonner <chase.bonner@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 1, 2024 at 1:43 PM

To: patrick.lennberg@state.co.us

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my profound concern and opposition to the proposed gravel pit in our residential area. This project poses significant risks that far outweigh any perceived benefits, jeopardizing both the health and quality of life of our community.

First and foremost, the potential for a substantial loss in property values is alarming. Studies indicate that homes adjacent to a gravel pit can experience a property value decline of up to 30%, with homes up to three miles away seeing a 5% decrease. Claims that property values will rebound post-mining are not supported by empirical evidence, which shows that the initial negative impact on property values is likely to persist.

The aesthetic degradation caused by the gravel pit cannot be overstated. Gravel pits are considered disamenities comparable to landfills, causing significant visual blight. This is not just an eyesore but a factor that profoundly affects the desirability of our community. Garfield County's gravel extraction management plan acknowledges that gravel pits are among the most visually unappealing and surface-damaging land uses.

Health concerns are equally pressing. The production of silica dust, a known carcinogen, presents serious air quality issues. Prolonged exposure to particulate dust from gravel pits can lead to irreversible respiratory damage, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions. Alarmingly, there has been no air quality monitoring at the nearby Bonser Pit, calling into question the reliability of any health assurances provided.

The proposed increase in heavy haul truck traffic is another major concern. Coulson's plan entails up to 220 one-way vehicle trips per day, predominantly by heavy haul trucks. This influx of traffic poses significant safety hazards for neighborhood commuters, school buses, and cyclists, and will undoubtedly lead to substantial road damage. The environmental impact, including noise pollution from the operation of conveyor belts, truck traffic, and diesel fumes, is also considerable. Operating from 7 am to 7 pm, six days a week, will severely disrupt the peace and quality of life in our community.

The site's location within the 100-year floodplain of the Big Thompson River presents additional risks. The area was underwater during the 2013 floods, raising serious concerns about potential flooding during the pit's operational life. Flooding could lead to pollution from machinery and fuel, and potentially alter the natural course of the river, impacting the ecosystem and nearby landowners.

Furthermore, there is significant uncertainty regarding the project's time frame. Coulson's estimates have varied widely, from seven to forty years. This lack of clarity, coupled with the likelihood of extensions, leaves residents in a prolonged state of uncertainty. Moreover, there are no guarantees about the post-mining reclamation of the land. Potential outcomes range from mosquito-breeding ponds to open pasture, with no clear plans for beneficial community use.

In light of these substantial concerns, I strongly urge the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety to reject the proposal for a gravel pit in our residential area. The health, safety, and well-being of our community must take precedence over industrial interests. The potential risks and negative impacts of this project are too great to ignore.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

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