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Montrose, CO 81403

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Division of Reclamation - Safety & Mining
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RE: File #M-2013-007

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Durango Field Office
Division of Reclamation,
Mining and Safety

This letter is to voice our opposition to the proposed gravel pit/strip mining operation located nine miles south of Montrose on Highway 550, on land currently zoned general agriculture.

The new owners of the land, Lazy K-Bar Land & Cattle Company, LLLP, have proposed to lease out a portion of the parcel that is not conducive to ranching to Rocky Mountain Aggregate and Construction. A strip mine of horrendous magnitude, covering over 250 acres, is proposed for this portion. The beautiful mesa will be totally destroyed.

The owners of the parcel of land withheld information from the public regarding their intentions right from the start. When landowners near the site such as ourselves were finally informed about the operation, we discovered that significant changes had already been made to widen T Road and that a single-family home was purchased to serve as an office and scale site, in anticipation of the project already being approved.

If the gravel pit/strip mining operation is allowed to proceed, the value of all property near the facility will plummet. We and many of our neighbors have invested much of our retirement in our home and land. An operation of this size would result in sizable decreases in equity. It is unfair for the Lazy K-Bar Land & Cattle Company to be able to enhance the value of their property at the expense of so many others.

Over the last several years, Montrose County has been experiencing strong winds & dust storms during the spring months. The operation will carry even more dust and dirt in the air and neighboring landowners will be subjected to the strong, unpleasant odor from the asphalt processing plant.

The extensive operation will also have a negative effect on the wildlife, including deer, elk, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, bears, eagles, hawks, kestrels, various songbirds, and possibly Gunnison sage grouse. With plant activity, noise, and pollution, these animals will be forced to relocate.

Montrose relies on tourism for its economy and on the retirement community for its growth. An eyesore like the gravel pit/strip mining operation and its heavy truck traffic will surely not appeal to tourists and prospective newcomers. There has been much invested in real estate both to the east and west of the mesa. The most rapid growth of Montrose is south of town. The operation will also have a detrimental effect on the value of vacant land and subdivisions waiting to be developed in the area.

It is estimated that there will be anywhere from 30 to 100 trucks per day entering and leaving the gravel pit/strip mining facility. This will include loaded and unloaded gravel trucks, cement trucks, asphalt trucks, fuel trucks and trucks delivering concrete and asphalt to be recycled. This is a very significant increase in traffic and poses a threat for oncoming traffic traveling 60 mph. The increased truck traffic also represents a hazard for school buses that travel on the highway.

To summarize, the strip mining operation will negatively impact:

- wildlife
- the environment
- property values
- residential living
- tourism
- the local economy
- driving conditions
- road quality

The attorney for Rocky Mountain Aggregate and Construction has publically admitted that this gravel pit/strip mining will be one of the largest of its kind in Colorado. As such, the negative aspects of this type of operation are multiplied. The company has made some concessions for the community, such as adding ingress/egress lanes to their facility. However, unless many larger concessions are made to the residents in the immediate vicinity and to the city and county at large, the impacts of project will be too significant. **Therefore, we ask that you deny this operation.**

Sincerely,

Stan Borinski
Kathy Borinski

Stan & Kathy Borinski
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