

**STATEMENT IN STRONG OPPOSITION TO  
COTTONWOOD SAND MINE PROJECT  
November 22, 2019**

The Cottonwood Sand Mine Project is a 280 acre recipe for disaster. In today's economy, a golf course going bankrupt is not a valid reason to disrupt an entire established residential community. According to the SANDAG "San Diego Region Aggregate Supply Study" dated January 2011, the need for sand should NOT mean that sand mining should be done in the middle of an established residential community. The San Diego County General Plan, the Valley de Oro Master Plan and the Rancho San Diego Specific Plan designate Willow Glen Drive a Scenic Highway. The property is zoned for recreational use, NOT industrial use. It is supposed to be a buffer area to protect sensitive habitat areas. This is an inappropriate and unacceptable location for a sand mine any way one looks at it.

There are already two gravel pits operating in this area within two miles of the site.

The traffic here is unbelievable. With two casinos, there is a great deal of car traffic plus casino buses and their supply trucks. The opening of the Sycuan twelve story, 300 guest room, 57 suite hotel and gas station has increased traffic significantly. The large number of double load sand and gravel transport trucks from the Hester Gravel Co. aka JCI Inc. aka Robertson's #96 sometimes has three or four trucks traveling in a row on Willow Glen Dr. and Jamacha Rd. With the addition of a minimum of 176 more gravel and sand trucks traveling on this road round trip per day, people living on Willow Glen Dr. will need a stop light to get out of their driveways.

Willow Glen Dr. is one of the most dangerous roads in San Diego County. There are multiple accidents including fatalities every year. There is no space for deceleration and acceleration lanes for the sand mine. The trucks will be entering and exiting the sand mine too close to both Jamacha Rd. and the Steele Canyon bridge. Therefore, the bottlenecks created will be terrible along with the accidents. Willow Glen Dr. is a major route for emergency vehicles. Usually, if there is a traffic accident or another emergency, there are multiple law enforcement vehicles, at least one

ambulance and a fire truck going to the scene. Frequently, drivers do not pull to the right and stop, especially the gravel trucks. This is bad for both the emergency crews and the victims.

The surface of Willow Glen Dr. is already in deplorable condition due to the number of gravel trucks traveling on it. Considering, that each gravel truck carries 25 tons of sand or gravel each trip this explains the condition of the roads. When the trucks are empty, the drivers race down the road to get back to the plant. It has been years since Willow Glen Dr. was actually entirely resurfaced. It is impossible to avoid the potholes when driving.

The Associated Press has identified Jamul as one of the three worst areas of San Diego County for fleeing a wildfire, due to too few evacuation routes for the population of the area. If the Enclave at Ivanhoe is built, this will add an additional 119 homes to the area. No one seems to be thinking about the tragedy a wildfire evacuation would be. This area is the main doorway to and from Jamul, Dulzura and Potrero. All are major horse ranching communities. In addition to cars, trucks and motor homes evacuating from these areas there would be pickup trucks pulling horse trailers of various sizes loaded with horses that are valuable both in terms of money and sentiment.

The danger to school children both at Jamacha Elementary and Steele Canyon High School, who walk, bicycle, drive or take a school bus to school, will be heightened. There is gridlock now on Jamul Dr., Steele Canyon Rd. and Willow Glen Dr. on weekdays. Not starting the trucks until 9:00 AM does not fix this problem as the traffic is equally as bad between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM.

The noise pollution would be horrible. Even “muted” backup bells are a total annoyance. A 2,000 foot long conveyor belt is not something that will beautify the environment. Also, there is an echo that occurs here due to it being a valley.

Noise, air and water pollution will be rampant. Even the use of a conveyor belt to transport the sand and gravel from the excavation site to the processing plant will not improve this. There will be dust both from

excavating and transferring the aggregate from the loader bucket to the conveyor belt and the conveyor belt to the processing machinery. There will be noise generated by the processing of the sand. Santa Ana winds will distribute the dust over a larger area.

The Greenhouse Gas produced by this project plus the destroying of the already established trees and vegetation on the property is incompatible with the Greenhouse Gas goals of the county.

Every area of San Diego County has places where PCC grade sand can be mined. Most of these areas are not places that are developed with an established community. There is no shortage of it in this county. If there is an overabundance of it being mined, it will be exported to other states thus negating the excuse that it is for local use.

Though it is a drought now, for this company to be messing with the course of the Sweetwater River is playing with dynamite. Those of us who lived here in 1980, know that government allowing two sand mines upstream to mess with the riverbed for their own profit was sure disaster for the rest of the community. My family had only lived here five months. We almost lost our house. We did lose three quarters of an acre of land. Our American dream was terribly close to being lost. This should not happen to anyone.

Proposition 65 identifies sand mining as a cancer causing business. Valley Fever can infect any mammal domestic or wild. There are multiple horse ranches in the area with valuable horses. Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) is another health risk. Diesel fuel is a health hazard whether it comes from trucks or heavy equipment. Because this is a narrow valley, the fumes stay in the air longer.

There are known areas where Native American artifacts can be found on this property. I know someone who watched some of them being removed when the golf course was illegally sand mining under the guise of improving the fairways. He says the artifacts were intact not broken pieces. They were museum quality and were illegally sold by the golf course owner and the excavator. He is willing to come forward and testify to this and point out the places where the artifacts were found. This area would have been a natural

place for the Kumeyaay people to camp due to the availability of water and game.

Some of the endangered species that would be affected are the California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, Arroyo Toads and Quino Checkerspot Butterflies to name a few. The National Wildlife Refuge is adjacent to this property. The site is within the South County and Metro-Lakeside-Jamul segments of the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program preserve. There are also, animals and birds that are not endangered, including bobcats, coyotes and wild turkeys. People choose to live here to observe the natural wonders of this beautiful valley.

Wise men tell us that the reason to study history is to keep history from repeating itself. No quarries or sand mines in East County have ever done any reclamation. Each company promises to be the first to do so. We don't want to trade what we have for an empty promise that everything will be fixed in twelve years. The developers only want to "work with the community" until they get their way. We want to keep what we have right now.

Property values will tank. Selling will not be a viable option as no buyer will want to purchase the property when they see, hear and smell the sand mine. This community is made up of hard working, middle class, taxpaying families that want to stay here for the rest of their lives. A sand mine on the other side of your retaining wall is not what people moved here to have.

Depressed property values will cost the County of San Diego as well. Property owners will request the county reassess their property for the lower property value. Over the expected twelve year time span of this project this will cost the county a fortune.

Since everything this project intends to do will ruinously effect the environment in this community, it is essential that the agencies identified in the County's Scoping Letter of May 31, 2019, in addition to any other affected agencies be included in the EIR notification process as well as the required approvals for the project.

Please recognize that this project is not a good deal for anyone except the owner of the property. The rest of us actually live, work and play here. This is our home. This project will harm everything in this community. We will not stand for this beautiful community being raped and destroyed by greed.

**NOT THE RIGHT TIME! NOT THE RIGHT PLACE! NOT THE RIGHT PROJECT!**

Sincerely,

Linda L. Wilks