

Dear Robert Hingtgen, Heather Steven, Bronwyn Brown, Jennifer Roady, Jessica Madamba, Department of Planning and Development Services, County Board of Supervisors, and Concerned Residents of San Diego, State Senator Jones, Assembly Member Weber, Assembly Member Vopel, Senator Feinstein, Senator Padilla, Representative Issa, and Representative Jacobs:

At a time when the people of Appalachia are beginning to reclaim their opencast and strip-mined land, and as an adolescent girl in a third world nation who is using recyclable materials to create walkways in her village is making international news, the Draft Environmental Impact Review (DEIR) that the Cottonwood Sand Mine backers authorized proposes an opencast sand mine operation, in the middle of what has just been determined to be the most expensive housing region in the nation. The DEIR and the Sand Mine Project it defends appear as a relic of the stone age. Though those who propose the sand mine are clearly in touch with their own needs and greeds—they are as out of touch with the community, the County, the environment, the wildlife, technology and the times as if they were cavemen.

In San Diego, and throughout the nation, we have mountains of recyclable material, sand that was once turned into glass can now be turned back into sand. We also have the top scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs in the world who are more than capable of turning those mountains of junk into roadways, walkways and construction material. But instead, it appears that there are those in San Diego County who may rather blast apart our gorgeous granite mountains, and opencast mine the golf courses for which the County is famous.

On June 29, 2021, I wrote to Robert Hingtgen, the County Board of Supervisors, and many others regarding my objection to the proposed Cottonwood Sand Mine, Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry, and the proposed Ivanhoe Ranch housing development. I provided photographs to make clear what cannot be adequately put into words. It is now roughly eight months later, the DEIR has come out, and I am writing and submitting photographs again. How many years of my life and the lives of other community members must be consumed before the County Board of Supervisors puts a stop to this abuse—once and for all.

The reason the County, when appropriate, considers granting an MUP for mining, is because the County needs the sand. In section 3.2.1.1-9 states, "The 570,000 tons of sand produced annually at the project site is anticipated to be supplied entirely to local markets within the County." Notice the word, "anticipated." The DEIR frequently uses squishy language like that and the oft repeated, "if feasible" and "to the extent feasible." There is nothing that guarantees the sand would be used locally, or that if someone outside the County offers a higher price or wants sand that the Project has and is not in demand in San Diego at a given time, that the Project won't sell it to them. The DEIR projects the aggregate material from the Proposed Project to bring in \$68,400,000 (see subchapter 3.2-3). The Project's main goal is to sell that \$68,400,000 worth of sand. Convincing you that they will sell it locally is just their way of getting you to let them do that.

Selling the sand and other materials outside the County not only negates their attempted justification for having the mine in-County, it negates their claim that having the mine in-County helps the County and State reach its emissions reduction goals. They claim in Section 3.1.3, "... mobile emissions account for the largest portion of the Project's GHG emissions (approximately 65 percent), but the Project would actually result in a net reduction in regional vehicle miles traveled due to increased regional efficiencies (i.e., reducing the need to import aggregate materials from outside the County.)" How does mining and selling aggregate locally reduce emissions if they are also allowed to sell aggregate outside the County to be transported on tractor trailers to sell to places as yet to be determined?

The DEIR states in Section 3.1.3 “The goal of the long-term production of mineral materials is to meet the local County average annual demand, while maintaining permitted reserves equivalent to a 50-year supply.” So, they want current residents in East County to suffer the sand mining and all the concomitant environmental, financial and health costs, so that there will be sand for the County 50-years from now? Not only is that not fair, it could be foolhardy because we don’t know what innovations will come into being over the next half century that could make using mined sand obsolete. And where do they plan to store that “50-year supply”? At the project site one must presume. And how are they going to control for dust blowing off that 50-year supply of sand? Hose it down twice a day, as they said? And what if they are contacted by companies outside San Diego that want to purchase from that reserve supply for a high price? Do you actually think they will say, “No”? I anticipate they will say, “Yes.”

The DEIR states, “Since the mid-1990s, local aggregate production has not been sufficient to meet local demand in the P-C Region [Western San Diego Production-Consumption Region].” For some reason they don’t mention the local demand in this densely populated East County Region in the middle of which they propose the sand would actually be mined. This region has seen tremendous development, and therefore no doubt tremendous consumption of aggregate, since the mid 1990’s. However, given its environmentally sensitive characteristics and fire risks, it has now, in 2022, pretty much reached its saturation point. So one cannot use the demand in the 1990’s to project what demand will be throughout the first half of this new century.

From what I understand, the party in question, the party for whom the County is dragging us through all this, bought the Cottonwood land for about \$6M in foreclosure, with no guarantee of a permit to mine, and now wants to be awarded a Major Use Permit allowing the destruction not just of that land but of the entire community with the unavoidable repercussions of sand mining the land he bought. You do realize that \$6M is likely what you would pay for just two or three of the mansions on Vista Sierra Drive and Valhalla View Drive, which overlook the Cottonwood Golf Club. That is what you’d have to pay for the three mansions now—if you let miners spend a decade scaring the land, gouging 40 feet down and across 251 acres, to extract 250,000 tons of aggregate a year—plus tons of overburden— creating clouds of toxic dust, you could maybe get the mansions cheap at an estate sale after the inhabitants die of respiratory disease.

Interestingly, the DEIR makes no mention in the “Residents” section, 2.1, of impact on these mansions, nor of the many more modest \$1M homes that cover the surrounding hills with a view into the Cottonwood Golf Course. If located elsewhere, these homes would probably not cost \$1M. They cost \$1M because they are located in the hills with a view of a beautiful golf course on land designated for agriculture and open space recreational use, that is adjacent a wildlife preserve and trails, and have direct access into downtown San Diego on the 94, portions of which the DEIR notes are eligible for designation as a scenic highway by Caltrans.

At the risk of sounding like an SNL “The Californians,” sketch, please allow me to explain. If you take scenic Willow Glen Drive straight to its corner with Jamacha Road, after turning left onto Jamacha, you can keep going straight as it becomes the 94 and continue going straight into the Horton Plaza Parking lot in 30 minutes without turning your steering wheel once.

That is the current commute—without the heavy truck loads of sand making 176 round trips in the area a day (88 oneway trips as stated in the DEIR). I hate to think how long that trip would take, the amount of braking and blind lane changing around massive sand laden trucks that would occur, the traffic jams, the number of accidents that would happen (some directly with those heavy sand laden trucks), the burden on road clean-up, emergency services and

hospitals and all the injuries and loss of life and property that would result from adding 176 daily truck trips into the mix. God forbid there be a fire or other disaster in the County.

Of note, in section 2.1.1.5, titled, “Viewer Response,” the authors of the DEIR have the audacity to suggest regarding the scenic portions of the drive, “A local County resident commuting to work, however, may not ‘register’ those same visual resources on a daily basis.” [quotation marks in the original.] Clearly, “those same visual resources” do not “register” with those behind the DEIR whose vision is obviously obscured by their intense desire to get permission to destroy those “same visual resources” in the creation of their sand mine, and the dollar signs that dance before their eyes as they contemplate that vision. However, the people who commute along Willow Glen often do so to begin and end their workday taking in the visuals on that scenic route—no matter what else they may have to endure during their workday, intense freeway traffic included. The moment many residents turn onto Campo Road, Steele Canyon Road or Willow Glen Drive (and some of us turn onto all three), they breath a sigh of relief that says, “I’m home. I can relax now.”

Despite acknowledging, “Motorists on this roadway are assessed as having a high sensitivity to change, given the high percentage of anticipated area residents among users of this local road, and the identification of this road as a scenic highway corridor in the Valle de Oro Community Plan,” the authors of the DEIR attempt to minimize this sensitivity by claiming exposure to the “Project is estimated at 2.5 minutes for drivers traveling a posted speed limit of 45 mph.” (It should be noted the Valle de ORO Community Planning Group has voted against the Proposed Project.)

They use the posted speed limit to calculate visual exposure time to the project! They do this calculation repeatedly in other areas throughout the report. 45 mph is the maximum speed limit, not the speed people will actually be traveling. By that measure, given the posted 65 mph speed limit on the 8, it should only take just a few minutes to fly through the College area of that portion of the freeway during rush hour. Have you ever been on the 8 in the College area during rush hour? Or should I say rush hours because rush hour on the 8 starts before 7 am and goes until at least 9 am in the morning and starts before 4 pm and goes past 6 pm in the evening—and that’s when there are no accidents!

There may be times when one can drive Willow Glen at 45 mph, but there are many times during the day when one may drive far more slowly—especially on a daily commute. Add to that 176 heavily burdened trucks a day in that precise Project area, and how fast do you think drivers will be traveling past the Project site and how long do you think their visual exposure will be—not just to the project site, but to the rear end of a massive, slow moving sand truck? Sensitive now? The authors of this DEIR are counting on people being either too lazy to read all of their verbose, contradictory, and redundant representations, or too stupid to engage their brains while doing so. Residents, on the other hand, don’t need to engage their brains reading the report. We know from our personal experience that the representations in this 596 page report are subterfuge.

The DEIR, in the “Aesthetics” sections 2.1-21 notes 5 highways that Caltrans has designated as scenic highways, but says none are in the area. They also mention one, the aforementioned highway 94, that comes within a mile of the site and is eligible for the designation, but the designation has not yet been applied for. Then, in the section, under, “Other Public Roadways,” 2.1-47, it states “...the Project would alter the existing character of these views. However, no designated valued focal panoramic vistas are located near the Project site including Steele Canyon Road. As a result, associated impacts to valued views from other public roadways would be **less than significant,**” they conclude—typing “less than significant” in bold.

The word “designated” is important here as it has technical meaning. The DEIR is not saying there are no “valued focal panoramic vistas” near the site—they are just saying those vistas have not yet been designated as such by Caltrans. In other words, the Project would damage the existing character of the views, but since these views have not yet been designated by Caltrans as being “valued focal panoramic vistas,” the impact of the damage to these views would be, they conclude in bold, “**less than significant.**” That is very bold of them to say. I don’t believe people driving in the area, gazing upon the views think to themselves, “I wonder if Caltrans has designated this view as valued? I better find out before I appreciate it.”

In reference to recreationalists the authors make equally lame statements like, “Despite the opportunity for expansive views of the Project site and surrounding area, recreationalists hiking on nearby trails overall have moderately low exposure, mainly due to the low number of users.” I’m beginning to wonder if the drafters of the DEIR have a thought disorder because the connections they seem to make and conclusions they reach are nonsense. That fewer people are exposed to an “expansive view” does not diminish the expansiveness of the view for the viewer. Just think of sitting alone on the beach gazing at the ocean, or standing atop the Grand Canyon. Would your view be any less expansive because you are alone?

Along this same line they make another ridiculous assertion. “...future recreationalists would not have access to proposed on-site trails until post reclamation, nor would they be walking immediately adjacent to the Project site until the mining is already occurring or the site has been reclaimed; therefore, they would not be comparing site conditions to an existing pre-project condition.” Essentially, what they are saying here is that future recreationalists who did not have the benefit of seeing how beautiful the site was before the sand miners tore it up, will have nothing to compare the site to so the miners can do whatever the hell they like with it and it doesn’t matter—the new folks won’t notice. Who are these people—and can you please make them go away? For the mental, physical, and social health of San Diegans, what the County should be doing is encouraging as many people as possible to get out and hike, or bike, or ride, or golf or do whatever they can in nature. Keeping the air clean and outdoor areas beautiful and accessible is key to that encouragement.

In Section 2.1-14, the DEIR also asserts, that they would, expect hiking viewers’ awareness of the Project site to be reduced to moderate levels because, “Along the McGinty Mountain Trail, as well as the County-designated Sweetwater Regional Trail, views toward the Project site are not sustained for long durations, as the trail alignments have winding sections (or switchbacks) that alter the line of sight for hikers and trail users.” Yes! That’s part of the beauty of hiking that brings one relaxation. One is not staring at the same view the entire time as if fixated. However, if as one is hiking one’s view repeatedly goes from trees, and wildflowers and critters, back to an ugly industrial site—that is visually, emotionally, psychologically and even physically disruptive. Those ugly images are hard to unsee—even after the trail turns to something beautiful again. That repeated interjection of the industrial site can evoke anger and anxiety especially for those in the community who have spent years objecting to it being permitted. The hiker may return home fuming mad and far less relaxed than when they set out for what was supposed to be recreation.

The DEIR draws similar faulty conclusions regarding those kicking back at Hilton Head County Park. Section 2.1-12 of the DEIR assesses residents expected “sensitivity to change to existing visual conditions,” (i.e. the replacement of gorgeous golf course views with the view of a 40 ft deep hole, over dozens of acres at any given time, with 25-foot high stock piles, muck ponds, elevated processing conveyers (36”X825’, 36”X375’, 36”X200’ 36”X130’ ), Radial stackers (36”X100’ and 36”X80’), blade mill, fine material washer, feed hopper, water truck, dump truck, bulldozer, excavator, front-end loaders, haul trucks, tractor trailers, and other vehicles and traffic from truckloads of sand....) as “moderately low, given the limited site visibility and the

fact that park users would generally be focused on the features of and activities occurring in the park and not surrounding areas.”

In most parks, one has one view when facing North, another when facing South..., so no, residents do not have a view of Cottonwood from every spot, every moment while in Hilton Head County Park—but this is true of everything, for everyone, everywhere. I have an expansive view of Cottonwood from my back yard, which many of you have seen in prior photographs. I don't have that view from my front yard, but that in no way diminishes my appreciation of the view and the importance that I place on having it there 24-hours a day—even though some of those hours I spend facing a different direction or in a different part of the yard.

It is equally absurd to claim that the people hanging out at Hilton Head County Park won't notice the view because they will be focused on other things. Wow! You would have to be a type AAA personality to go to a park and be so focused on what you are doing there to not notice the view. Do any of you have a window in your office? Do you ever look out it? It's okay. You can admit it to me. I know you are hyper-focused on your work for the entire 8 hours of your day—yet I do expect you look up from your computer from time to time and gaze out the window at the view. People work long and hard to get an office with a window and a view—even if they don't expect to spend the entire 8 hours looking at it. How would you like it if your employer said, look, you're focused on your computer work all day, and your desk, chair and computer can really fit in the hall storage closet—so I'm going to move you there. It's spacious and I assure you, you are so focused on your work you won't even notice the shelves of supplies or piles of broken furniture and equipment stored there. The impact on you will be “moderately low,” trust me, I tell you, it's true.”

Perhaps the most absurd supposition the DEIR makes goes as follows, “Limited use by pedestrians and cyclists is assumed because no sidewalks are provided along Steele Canyon Road south of the bridge and bike lanes are not striped on the road.” Forgive me but I can't seem to read or type that without laughing. What, do they think? That you're all city slickers and will buy that rural residents are sitting in their back yards making BBQ as they wait for someone from the County to come give them a sidewalk to walk on or a bike trail for riding? I was raised in a rural community with the highest horse per capita population in the country and there was not a single sidewalk, bike lane or formal trail in town. That did not hold one person back from walking or biking or riding down a country mile. The notion is so hilarious I must cover my eyes to think of it. This DEIR is a joke—a deadly joke.

Speaking of things deadly, the visual blight (particularly for those who live in the hills and whose views cannot be shielded by fencing and barriers, and who have no choice but to commute into downtown—whether by car or bus) is not the primary concern. The greatest concern is for air quality and health, particularly for those who live and work at the street level of the mine (including those actually working at the proposed mine) while the hundreds of acres of earth around them are dug down 40 feet deep, releasing silica dust and Valley Fever (i.e. *Coccidioides*).

In response to expressed strong community concern regarding Valley Fever, the DEIR notes in Section 3.1.14, “The ecologic factors that appear to be most conducive to survival and replication of the spores are high summer temperatures, mild winters, sparse rainfall, and alkaline sandy soil.” Where does that sound like to you? It sounds like the proposed sand mine site to me.

The DEIR goes on to state, “San Diego County is a suspected endemic area for *Coccidioides* (CDC 2014). When present, the fungal spores are generally found in the upper 30 centimeters (12 inches) of the soil horizon, especially in undisturbed soil. Currently there are no

commercially available tests to detect *Coccidioides* in soil. Testing that is done for limited scientific purposes does not always detect the spores even if they are present (CDC 2020)

“It is estimated that 60 percent of those infected with Valley Fever have no symptoms. For the remaining cases symptoms of Valley Fever can initially include fatigue, cough, fever, shortness of breath, headache, night sweats, muscle pain, and rashes. In approximately five to ten percent of cases, people exposed to *Coccidioides* can develop complications or chronic pulmonary diseases. In rare cases, disseminated disease (which can be fatal) can occur and affect the shinbones, soft tissues, and central nervous system.... People working in occupations such as construction, agriculture, and archaeology have increased exposure and disease because these jobs result in disturbance of soils where fungal spores may be found (California Department of Public Health [CDPH] 2013).”

The Chart in Section 3.1.1. of annual incidence rates identifies 2,052 cases in San Diego County, however, as noted above, the disease has varying symptoms. People may not always realize what it is they are suffering from and consequently may not report it. Therefore, I suspect the actual cases in San Diego to be substantially higher than the reported cases.

Regarding the likelihood of *Coccidioides* at the Project site (which as noted above cannot be tested for) the authors of the DEIR state in Section 3.1.1-21, “Fugitive dust control is considered the primary tool to reduce potential exposure to the spores, if present in the soils being disturbed. The Project would be required to implement a Fugitive Dust Control Plan as a design feature....” However, the DEIR defines their design feature in Section 2.2-42 as spraying the area with water twice a day. Section 3.1.1-12 states that the Project will limit speeds to 15 MPH. (More on their fugitive dust mitigation design later.)

Section 3.1.1.21 goes on to state “The Project site is currently used by the public for golfing activities.” However, the DEIR acknowledges, only one of the two 18 hole courses is in current use. The other 18 hole course has not been used since 2017. The active course, although in current use, appears to be sparsely used and there are user complaints on Yelp of it being poorly maintained. It is likely that the property went into foreclosure because the cost of maintaining the course was too high to cover given the limited revenue from the few users—especially because there are two other courses nearby one at the Steele Canyon Golf Club and the the other at the Sycuan Golf & Tennis Resort, which in Subchapter 3.2-5 the DEIR documents “are located 1 mile and 2.5 miles from the Cottonwood Golf Course, respectively.”

The DEIR states the Project will also use equipment with diesel engines as well as a gas and other unidentified petroleum based materials. Of the Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), it states in Section 3.1.1, “Because of their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lung.... DPM has a significant impact on California’s population—it is estimated that about 70 percent of total know cancer risk related to air toxins in California is attributable to DPM (CARB 2018)”

Regarding construction-related health risks, section 3.1.1-2 estimates, “The longest construction period would be prior to Phase 1 for preparation and grading the processing pad and settling ponds. This construction utilizing diesel equipment is anticipated to last a maximum of 50 working days and would require up to six pieces of heavy equipment working at one time (Table 3.1.1-8)”

This 50-day period is the only time period they note here. So what are they doing for the rest of the 12 years? Are they parsing words and perhaps there are 20, 45-day periods, and 15, 30-day periods...., but those are shorter than the 50-day period they document so feel they can omit them from the report without technically lying? What’s up?

Regarding their haul trucks and tractor trailers in each direction at the corner of Jamacha Road and Willow Glen Drive, the DEIR reports, “The Project would generate 212 average daily trips (ADT) during operation, or 476 ADT including a 2.5 passenger car equivalent (PCE) factor for trucks (LLG 2021a).” I know from my own experience that currently, even in the middle of the day without all their trucks, there are vehicles in line idling at the light. So, I don’t care how much hocus pocus they throw in, there is going to be a massive number of cars and trucks idling in line to turn from Jamacha onto Willow Glen, and on Willow Glen to turn onto Jamacha. There are likely also to be a lot of irate drivers driving recklessly to get ahead of the trucks so they won’t get stuck waiting in line yet again through 3 or more changes of light to make their turn. This is the human element that one must not fail to consider.

Regarding the fugitive dust from the Project site, section 3.1.1-3 states, “Respirable crystalline silica—very small particles at least 100 times smaller than ordinary sand—is created when cutting, sawing, grinding, drilling and crushing stone, rock, concrete, brick, and mortar. Potential health risks resulting from inhalation of respirable crystalline silica include silicosis, an incurable lung disease; lung cancer; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and kidney disease (U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration [USOSHA] 2018). In addition to respirable crystalline silica, the dust from mining operations and processing plants can contain very small amounts of toxic metals and elements including arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, copper, chromium, manganese, mercury, nickel, and selenium. Significant exposure to these toxic metals and elements can result in a wide range of health effects including cancer, long-term chronic conditions, and short-term acute effects.”

I have attached photographs taken from the hills where I live, that have a view of the Cottonwood Golf Club. You can see some of the many homes in this area, which the report failed to discuss, and how this area is already being destroyed from the blasting of the mountain by Hester’s Granite Co./Robertson’s SD Quarry and the processing of rock and building materials at J. Cloud, Inc.—the sound from which echoes against the carved out granite mountain up to the hills facing it as if from an amphitheater.

One of the photos shows this dust hovering like a low cloud several feet over the area where the rock is being processed. As the photographs show, the processing takes place from sun up well into the dark of night, 6 days a week. The blasting of the mountain occurs weekly at different times of day on any weekday. Most times a siren (like the kind that precedes air raids in war) sounds and residents are to take their animals and run into their homes and stay there until the siren sounds twice more. However, one does not always hear the siren sound prior to a blast and also, if one is hiking or otherwise engaged outdoors, one may not be able to get oneself and one’s pets and livestock indoors in time. You will see in the photographs I provide what happened to one horse that was left outside during a blast, and you will also see just how far, wide and high into the neighborhood and surrounding mountains the toxic dust travels.

Joel Cloud (whom Dun & Bradstreet list as the key principal and owner of Hester’s Granite Company and whose son presented a report on behalf of the sand miners at the first in-person Valle de Oro Planning Group meeting I attended in 2019, and attended at least one of the recent virtual meetings, and may have worked on the DEIR) has told me and others in my presence that he intends to process rock and materials from the proposed sand mine at the J. Cloud, Inc., Hester’s Mine/Robertson’s SD Quarry, location also on Willow Glen—further jeopardizing the health and tranquility of current residents with no end in sight.

This is important to note regarding the sand mine’s petition for a MUP because the DEIR subchapter 2.4-5 states, “While the processing plant would be stationary, noise levels from operation of the processing plant would be below the applicable threshold of 60 dB CNERL at nearby NSLUs and 75 dBA LEQ at the Project site property line (as discussed in further detail below.)” Furthermore, subchapter 2.4-9 states, “The most prominent source of vibration during

mining operations would be the use of a low-profile haul truck or tractor-trailer for on-site transport of washed fines from the processing plant to backfill areas.... The Project's haul truck/tractor trailer is assumed for analysis purposes to operate as close as 150 feet from off-site occupied residences." At one of the virtual meetings, when a community member expressed concern about the noise from rock crushing, someone spoke up to allay their fears assuring that no rock crushing would occur on the site.

Community members at the virtual meetings repeatedly attempted to learn who wrote the DEIR, but the author/authors were never disclosed. Chapter 6, "List of EIR Preparers and Persons And Organizations Contacted," lumps together people who were good enough to provide information to the authors, (such as members of the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation—who oppose the Project) with the authors themselves. The most one can learn regarding authorship is the statement at the top, "This EIR was prepared under the direction of the County of San Diego Planning and Development Services located at...." On the next page, the DEIR identifies the three top people associated with the Project at the Department of Planning and Development Services as, Robert Hingtgen, Heather Stevens, and Bronwyn Brown. Since these three County employees are responsible for reviewing the DEIR and community feedback to it, one would hope that they are not also the authors of it. In the absence of identifiable authorship, the DEIR is placing responsibility for the contents on the "Persons Contributing to EIR Preparation." I wonder why the author/authors are so willing to name credit to so many others, while not revealing their own name/names—and so should you! I have put my name on my analysis of their report. I don't think you would give my comments much credence if I had refused to do so. (Anecdotally, Brown is a very common last name so one expects there is no connection between Bronwyn Brown and Greg Brown—the latter of whom, according to [stopcottonwoodsandmine.org](http://stopcottonwoodsandmine.org) is one of entities petitioning the County government for the MUP.)

Given that it is already known to me and others that Joel Cloud (who is supporting the sand mine Project) is planning—by his own public admission—to conduct the noisy rock processing (through agreement with the Proposed Project) down the road at his J. Cloud Inc. operation; it is therefore a sin of omission and a misrepresentation, for the DEIR to state that the "processing plant would be stationary" with operation levels "below the applicable level of 60 dB," when they know full well that, although their processing site may be stationary, their rock from the site will not be stationary, and is expected to travel about 3 minutes from the site, on low-profile haul truck or tractor-trailers to the opposite side of Willow Glen at a location that I have previously described as producing noise that echos as if from an amphitheater. Need I say, someone is trying to pull the wool over your eyes. You need to go up to Vista Sierra Drive and Valhalla View Drive if you want to hear what the processing of rock from the sand mine area will actually sound like. Those roads are private and not open to outside vehicles, so I invite the Board of Supervisors, Robert Hingtgen, and others in the Planning and Development Department to contact me if they would like to go up to where they can hear what that processing facility sounds like now.

Furthermore, massive trucks, heavily laden with toxic material and spewing exhaust fumes, will not only be traveling Willow Glen in one direction to exit onto Jamacha, but will also be traveling in the opposite direction on Willow Glen to deliver and dump at J. Cloud, Inc., what they have dug up at Cottonwood.

Subchapter 3.1.7.1-2, regarding traffic and transportation states of the existing conditions: "Willow Glen Drive is classified as a 4.1N Major Road in the County of San Diego General Plan, Valle de Oro Mobility Element Network. Willow Glen Drive is currently constructed as a four-lane undivided roadway between Jamacha Road and Steele Canyon Road and as a three-lane roadway with a two-way left turn lane between Steele Canyon Road and the eastern project boundary. Bus stops are not provided and on-street parking is not permitted.



### “Existing Bicycle Network

Currently, Class II bike lanes are provided on Both sides of Willow Glen Drive within the vicinity of the Project.

Pedestrian sidewalks are provided along the northern side of Willow Glen Drive from Jamacha Road to approximately 150 feet west of the existing golf course entrance where the concrete sidewalk ends. There is no sidewalk present on the south side of Willow Glen Drive along the Project Frontage.”

What the DEIR doesn't tell you is that just past the Project site, Willow Glen is only a two-lane country road with bike lanes, all the way down and past Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry and J Cloud, Inc. How would you like to be one of the cyclists in that bike lane, as the Project's haul truck/tractor trailers vibrate past you, traveling in both directions on this two-lane scenic country road, spewing emission fumes and shaking fugitive toxic dust on you and in the air you breathe. How would you like to be a member of the local cycling club or the Valhalla High Cross Country team using those bike lanes—as they currently do?

The corner of Jamacha and Willow Glen is commercial with a BevMo and 3Flames Bar and Grill and other businesses on the Project side, and many many other businesses on the other side of Willow Glen. That is why that corner is broader and why the sidewalk on Jamacha wraps around the corner. However, the sidewalk appropriately ends where the business area ends and the rural portion of Willow Glen begins. Despite that portion being wider to accommodate the turning of existing mining related trucks, it can already be a challenge for cars on Willow Glen to cross the backed up traffic into these local businesses with the double tractor trailer/haul trucks from Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry and J Cloud, Inc. Imagine if there were over 100 of them going back and forth every day between 9-3:30.

As you know, the 94-acre Hester Granite Co. is also seeking to expand/extend its permit. With the addition of the 251-acre sand mine and possible expansion of Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's Quarry operation, both sides of rural Willow Glen and even the scenic roadway itself, will be devoted to mining. If these permits are issued/extended you will essentially be handing the whole area over to the mining industry. You can kiss the residents goodbye. According to Singh, Pal and Kholyanbam (2009) “All major opencast mining activities produce large quantities of dust particles,” they go on to cite, CMRI (1998) “Drilling and blasting in the granite excavation sites, loading, transport, crushing in granite crushing sites and overburden dumps are the main sources of particulate pollution in and around the mining sites in Jhansi.” (There will be more on this later.)

Since, over the years, the County Board of Supervisors has allowed what appears to me to be thousands of people to move into this area in sprawling developments, and since these people had a right to presume the area they were moving into would be healthy and safe, then, for the health and safety of these inhabitants, the current County Board of Supervisors has an obligation to these residents to put an end to all mining and processing activities and begin reclamation of all effected land. No associated permits should be extended or issued.

People need to be able to trust you to do right by them. It should not take hundreds of residents, going to meeting after meeting, writing letter after letter, pooling their meager funds to hire lawyers to fight year after year after year. This is common sense. If the Board gives developers permits to build hundreds of homes in an area, the Board cannot also give miners permits to mine hundreds of acres in the middle of the neighborhoods where they have permitted the developers to build and people to move. Furthermore, if the need for housing is such that past Board members have allowed developers to build in an area where there are

existing mining activities, then current Board members must correct for that by insisting that the mining related activities stop and the land reclamation begin. It's an either/or neither/nor matter. You can't permit both—and this particular area has reached the saturation point where it is clearly a matter of neither/nor.

Photos from the hills above Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry/J.Cloud Inc. and the Cottonwood Golf Club: [Not included are my live recordings from the area]

- 1) Excavation at Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry from Valhalla View. JPEG 65757
- 2) Dust hovers over the J Cloud, Inc. operation on a day with no blasting 2/7/21. JPEG 65738
- 3) Dust rising from a mound at J Cloud, Inc on a day with no blasting 2/7/21 JPEG 65756
- 4) J Cloud, Inc. operating at 6:40 AM, 10/29/21 (as usual) JPEG 65724
- 5) J Cloud, Inc. in operation at 8:24 PM, 9/21/21(as usual) JPEG 65752
- 6) J Cloud, Inc closed at 11:14 PM, 9/21/21 (as usual) JPEG 65720
- 7) Black horse rearing at the sound of a blast into the mountain on 8/5/21. JPEG 65753
- 8) Long shot of horse on left and approaching blast cloud on the right on 8/5/21. JPEG 65712
- 9). Granite dust obliterating view of the horse, pasture, homes, everything. 8/5/21 JPEG 65716
- 10) The same dust cloud expanding and rising through the area. 8/5/21 JPEG 65714
- 11) Same cloud rising high up to mansions on the ridge and mountains. 8/5/21. JPEG 65750
- 12) Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry/J Cloud from home up on Burris. JPEG 65760
- 13) View of the Cottonwood Golf Club & developments from homes up on Burris. JPEG 65730
- 14) Street level view of some of the homes on Willow Glen across from Hester's JPEG 65761
- 15) Rattle snake coiled poolside 10/13/21 JPEG 65755
- 16) Sign at Hester's Granite Co./Robertson's SD Quarry 65762
- 17) "Selling Your Home? Call Joel Cloud" sign at Hester/Robertson's/J Cloud site JPEG 65763

When people in the community know how much toxic dust has been released into their atmosphere for decades, you cannot expect them to believe that the tons of sand and dust a day from the sand mine will be controlled with a water truck and hose, as designated on 1-4 of the DEIR. You cannot expect the people of this area to believe that their health and safety and the health and safety of the regions people, animals, plants, air, water and land will be a significant concern of the miners when those concerns have been ignored for decades. You cannot expect the people of this community to believe that this new mining venture will not disrupt every aspect of their lives, including their health, their relationships, their pets and livestock, their fruit, vegetable and berry gardens, their recreation, their commutes, their property values, their finances, and their composure. You cannot expect the people of this community to be that stupid. And if you allow this mining venture to move forward, you cannot expect the people of this community to ever vote for you again. We have experienced too much already. This is bi-partisan consensus. Nothing has brought Republicans, Democrats, and those with other and no party affiliations together to work so strongly toward a common purpose as this threatened invasion from the proposed sand mining operation.

The following was taken from the above referenced: "Impact of mining on human health in and around Jhansi, Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, India. J. Ecophysiol. Occup. Hlth. 9 (2009) 47-54  
(R) 2009 The Academy of Environmental biology, India

Gaytari Singh, Amit Pal and R. S. Kholyanbam  
Institute of Environment and Development Studies, Bundelkhand University.  
Jhansi—284 128, UP, India

"Granite is a common, coarse-grained, light colored, hard igneous rock consisting mainly of quartz, orthoclase or microcline and mica.... The effects of dust clouds and deposition are both visible and tangible in the mining sites.

“All major opencast mining activities produce large quantities of dust particles. Dust not only deteriorates the environmental air quality in and around the mining site but also creates serious health hazards. Under ground mining impacts directly on the health of those working underground, but opencast mining creates wider air quality deterioration due to dust and gaseous pollutants in and around the mining complexes.... In opening an opencast mine, massive overburden has to be removed to reach the mineral deposit (Ghose, 1989).... Given our new understanding of the significance of deposited dust in air quality, it is one of the main causes of complaint about air pollution (Vallack and Shillito, 1998). The magnitude and significance of environmental pollution caused by mining depends on the type of mineral being mined, the method of mining and various other factors. (Ghose 2007)

“...Respirable dust sampler (RDS) was used for the collection [of] respirable suspended particulate matter (RSPM)....

“It was found that the stone crushing site was more polluted with RSPM compared to the excavation sites.” (Gaytari, Pal and Kholyanbam, pp. 47-49)

“Most major mining activities contribute directly or indirectly [to] air pollution. (Kumar et al., 1994, CMRI, 1998). Sources of air pollution in mining areas generally include drilling, blasting, overburden loading and unloading, road transport losses from exposed overburden dumps (CNRI, 1998). Drilling and blasting in the granite excavation sites, loading, transport, crushing in granite crushing sites and overburden dumps are the main sources of particulate pollution in and around the mining sites in Jhansi....

“...Health problems related to skin and respiratory are widely prevalent in the area....” (Hendrick, et al., 2002) “...Some of the respiratory problems encountered in the present survey were silicosis, pneumoconiosis, occupational asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (including emphysema and/or chronic bronchitis), toxic pneumonitis and hypersensitivity pneumonitis. Crystalline silica is a common but variable component of granite. It is well documented that chronic and, in some cases, acute exposure to dust containing silica can cause serious health problems (IARC, 1997). It has its own brand of pneumoconiosis in the form of silicosis which affects those in contact and heavy contact with this type of dust; within a few years of prolonged inhalation can result in death. Silica dust also tends to increase the risk to individuals of developing lung cancer, tuberculosis, auto-immune diseases and arthritis.

“The digging, blasting and drilling of granite mine generated dust particles of various sizes into the immediate atmosphere. Most of this dust is usually made up of silica (occurring as silicon dioxide SiO<sub>2</sub>). Among all the contaminants of the atmosphere in the granite mining areas, dust is probably the most abundant and ubiquitous. Investigators revealed that several workers were not aware of the proper safety procedures. Background noise and vibration is an unavoidable by-product of mining activity often inducing considerable stress on the workforce. The problems related to noise in the granite mining sites at Gora Machiya ranged from sleeping disorder, depression, hearing loss both temporary and permanent.... To sum up, achieving good health and living in a healthy environment are justifiable rights of any person, and should be in the center of any major governmental policies (Sen, 2001) Health and safety risks associated with small and large scale mining are complex, and dependent upon the mineral mined, depth of mining, and its scale. Mining companies must accept that mining activities disrupt communities in terms of health and psychological well-being. The connections between a healthy environment and healthy productive communities are significant. The World Health Organization defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’ ” (Gaytari, Pal and Kholyanbam, pp. 50-53)

“References”

“CMRI (1998) Determination of emissions factor for various opencast mining activities, *ReportGap/9/EMG/MOEF/97*, Central Mining and Fuel Research Institute, Dhanbad, India.”

Ghose, M.K. Pollution due to air borne dust particles in coal mining, its monitoring and abatement measures. *Minetech*, 10, 91-95.

Ghose, M.K. (2007) Generation and quantification of hazardous dusts from coal mining in the Indian context. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 130, 35-45

“Hendrick., D.J., Burge, P.S., Beckett, W.S. and Chung, A. (2002) Occupational disorders of the lung, Recognition, management, and prevention. WB Saunders.”

“International Agency for Research on Cancer (1997) IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of the Carcinogenic Risks to Humans: Silica, Some Silicates, Coal Dust and Para-aramid Fibrils. World Health Organization (WHO) ED, Lyon 68.”

“Kumar, C.S.S., Kumar P.m, Deshpand, V.P. and Badrinath, S. D. (1994). Fugitive dust emission estimation and validation of air quality model in bauxite mines, in Khuntia, G.S., (Ed.), *Processing of International conference on Environmental Issues in Mineral and Energy Industry*, IME Publications, New Delhi, India, pp.77-81.”

Sen, Amartya @001) “Why Health Equity.” Keynote Address to the Third International Conference on “*The Economics of Health: Within and Beyond Healthcare*,” York, July 23, 2001.

“Vallack, H.W. and Shillito, D.E. (1998) Suggested guidelines for deposited ambient dust. *Atmos. Environ.*, 32, 2737-2744.

Prior to the pandemic I attended and even spoke at Valle de Oro Planning Group meetings. Before that I attended and spoke at the November 4, 2019 meeting at the Hillsdale Elementary School, which the DEIR references on page S-5. I also attempted to attend what I believe was the first meeting on the issue, which was held at the Rancho San Diego Library—however, parking was so difficult to find that by the time I walked the distance from my car to the library the hall was overflowing into the library parking lot so many of us were turned away at the door prior to commencement of that meeting. I believe that is why they provided the additional meeting and booked it at the elementary school.

In consideration, after the release of the DEIR, I read the entire nearly 600-page redundant report. I attended both the County and the Jamul-Dulzura Community Planning Group virtual meetings from beginning to end. There were technical difficulties with the links to the Valle de Oro Community Planning Group virtual meeting so many members of the public were unable to attend it. Of the meetings I attended, I heard everyone’s comments and also followed the simultaneous “chats.” Not only did the public find numerous technical problems with the DEIR (it’s failure to adequately address the unmitigable problems impacting health of humans, pets and livestock [especially due to Silicosis and Valley Fever], pollution of air, water and land, traffic, resource use, safety, esthetics, noise, and destruction of cultural and archeological artifacts... that the sand mine would inevitably engender, as well as the DEIR’s repeated use of phrases like “to the extent feasible” in reference to mitigation strategies that are clearly insufficient) the public also found the DEIR highly offensive in character. Let me express from the heart just how ignorant of the area and it’s people the writers of the DEIR either appear to be—or hope that you are.

For example: they claim in the section on Aesthetics 2.1, “Because of intervening development, vegetation and landscaping, the entire Project site and multiple subphase areas would not be visible from all of the identified locations within the view shed area.” However, I have already pointed out that many, if not most, of the homes are in the surrounding hills. Like seats rising above each other in a cinema, the homes do not block one another’s view so the Project site can be viewed from many many miles a way and would be a key focal point from many many yards. A fence, a tree, a berm, mesh or anything else at Project level does not block the view from the hills, nor the sound—no matter high or thick it is built. They go on to say, “Atmospheric conditions such as fog, mist, haze, and/or smog can decrease visibility and cause features to lose sharpness at approximately 0.5 miles.” Are they for real? We’re supposed to pray for fog to mask their unsightly mess for 12 years?

In section 2.1, they describe, “The intactness of the Project site is also moderate, degraded by the disturbed nature of the Western Lake Course, which is unmaintained, unirrigated, and displays a much less manicured appearance relative to the Ivanhoe Course.” (Personally, I prefer the look of the Western Lake Course because it has lots of trees and looks quite natural.) They go on to say, “Though the vividness of the Project Area is moderately high.... The noticeable contrast between the adjacent Lakes and Ivanhoe Course, unmaintained golf course signage and chain link fencing, and multiple transmission lines and support structures, notably detracts from the overall memorability of the area.”

You know what would be REALLY memorable? A view of a 40 ft deep ditch, over dozens of acres at any given time, with 25-foot high stock piles, muck ponds, mounds of aggregate for 50-year reserves, elevated processing conveyers (36”X825’, 36”X375’, 36”X200’ 36”X130’ ), Radial stackers (36”X100’ and 36”X80’), blade mill, fine material washer, feed hopper, water truck, dump truck, bulldozer, excavator, front-end loaders, haul trucks, tractor trailers, and other vehicles and traffic from truckloads of sand.... Whether you cut that dog’s tail off in one fell swoop or one inch at a time—as my wise mother used to say—that hurts!

And although the DEIR complains that the existing chain link fencing and signage detract from the “memorability of the area;” later, in section 1.2.1.5. titled, “Fences,” the DEIR details adding more fencing and signage! “During the Project’s operational lifetime, public access would be controlled by fencing.... Lodge pole fencing.... Signage would be posted around the perimeter... at 150 foot intervals. ...Project would consist of four-foot-high, four-strand barbed wire; along all other public areas six-foot-high chain link fence would be installed where not currently present.”

So how does that offer a visual improvement? Throughout the report they also mention putting up screen mesh all over the place to mask the unsightly view of their operation. I don’t want to look at screen mesh as I drive home. That reeks of industrial site. I want to look at the existing Cottonwoods and Willows, and Eucalyptus, and shrubs, and greenery—and by greenery I don’t mean green mesh. The mesh the DEIR offers as a mitigation is itself an intrusive eyesore.

The authors of the DEIR are counting on people either not reading their 596-page document, or not being capable of retaining one thought in their mind as they read forward several pages where that thought is shown for what it is—more blah, blah, blah.

In a similar vein, while addressing, “Impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and riparian habitats” they admit, “Impacts to jurisdictional waters and wetlands would be considered potentially significant.” Then, in the “Mitigation” portion, after more blah, blah, blah, the DEIR states on page S-20, “The Project requires preparation of a wetland mitigation plan for impacts to wetland habitat and jurisdictional waters to be approved by the County (wetland impacts only) and US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) (impacts to waters of the U.S. and

State, and CDFW riparian habitat and streambed), as applicable. Approval of the plan and/or acceptance of mitigation bank credits by the USACE, CDFW, and RWCB shall be a condition of the associated wetland permits for the Project.” They subsequently conclude the impacts on said issues would be “Less than Significant.”

How can they conclude that the effects would be “Less than Significant” prior to the aforementioned mitigation plans being offered let alone approved by the above mentioned agencies? How can they expect to be issued an MPU contingent on the approval of the above mentioned plans by the above mentioned agencies without first providing the plans and proof of their status as approved? They are hoping decision makers don’t read, much less analyze, their 596 page report, and will instead focus on the “Conclusion and Mitigation Effectiveness” column, skimming down to see all but four items concluded to be “Less than Significant,” and accept those statements as truth. This sort of Three Card Monte continues throughout the hundreds of pages of report, and just like the hucksters I used to see on Fifth Avenue scamming the tourists, these sand miners are hoping you won’t catch their sleight of hand.

Now, someone who is more of a sticker for clarity in the usage of the English language might notice that given that the title of that column is “Conclusion and Mitigation Effectiveness,” their Conclusion of “Less than Significant” actually means that the Mitigation Effectiveness they offer is “Less than Significant.” That is actually a true statement. None of the mitigation efforts they offer would have more than an insignificant effect—but that is not what I think they meant to say.

As for the existence of the transmission lines they mention; look, nobody is happy about the transmission lines, especially given the fire risk they present with the thousand of people who have been added to the area since the lines were installed. For reasons of safety and esthetics, the transmission lines should be put underground. The sand mine does nothing to accomplish that. In fact, in the DEIR they admit to the increased exposure of the lines and poles that would result from tree removal. Raising this pretense of the unsightly and dangerous transmission lines as a factor that diminishes the quality of the views such that the area can no longer be considered beautiful enough to preserve spits in the face of residents. It’s like someone seeing a candy wrapper littered on your lawn and using that as an excuse to drive over with truck loads of moldy mattresses and garbage from an encampment and dumping it all next to the candy wrapper—claiming that they saw the wrapper and assumed it must be a dumping ground. The unincorporated areas are not the County’s dumping ground and resident’s demand that the Board of Supervisors not let it be trashed.

To that point, Subchapter 2.2-70 states, “Although the Project is exempt from the RPO as discussed in the local regulatory framework under *Resource Protection Ordinance* in Section 2.1.1.1, and *County RPO Wetland (Guideline 27)* in Section 2.1.2.5, above, mitigation measures M-BIO-8, and M-BIO-14 through M-BIO-16, would compensate for habitat loss to these areas and mitigate potential impacts associated with local policies, ordinances, and adopted plans to less than significant.”

In other words, the DEIR is stating that according to the above referenced regulations they are not even required to mitigate for the destruction of habitat they will cause, but are providing it anyway—I guess because they’re just really nice guys.

However, if you go to DEIR section 2.1-23, “County of San Diego Resources Protection Ordinance,” the DEIR states, “Pursuant to Section 86.605(d) of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, sand, gravel or mineral extraction projects (such as the Proposed Project) are exempt from RPO requirements provided certain mitigation measure are implemented as the

condition of the MUP.” In other words, this section states that they are only exempt from RPO requirements if they implement mitigation as a condition of the MUP.

Section 3.1.3-10 states, “Mineral extraction use is allowed within the S80 and S90 classifications with the issuance of a Major Use Permit. S88 zoning restricts extractive uses of the site preparation, which allows the off-site removal of materials when it is secondary to the future use of the site. Two of the Project’s parcels are zoned S88 and the end use for both would be open space, consistent with the Rancho San Diego Specific Plan.”

The whole area is open space with trails for golf carts that, with no additional expense, could also be used right now for pedestrians and bikes and wheelchairs—if open to the public. There are even bathrooms at each golf course and in the club house and restaurant—all of which the DEIR states they will destroy. And there is no indication they will be replaced. So how can anyone justify as “secondary,” digging the area 40 ft. deep, to subsequently restore the area, after at least 12 years, to its current use—open space and trails? And image not even providing hygiene facilities the public will need to have present in order to use the area comfortably? Using Cottonwood as open space and trails right now would also cut water usage way lower than both the current usage as a golf course, or future usage as a mining operation.

Whatever regulation or code above that you reference, on that basis a company could be granted an MUP, to gouge a 251 acre, 40 foot deep sand mine in the middle of Balboa Park, adjacent the San Diego Zoo—so long as the petitioner provided a report with hundreds of pages of faulty analysis, subterfuge, and assurances to mitigate damage, “if feasible.” Good luck with that! For those of us out here in East County, Cottonwood is the closest thing we have to a Balboa Park and it would be as ridiculous to sand mine there, as in the middle of Balboa.

In a couple of places in 2.2-81 (regarding M-BIO-14, M-BIO-15, and M-BIO-16) as well as other places in the DEIR the “purchase of mitigation credits” and the acceptance of mitigation bank credits,” is proposed. Let’s be clear, the community is not interested in the company purchasing or exchanging mitigation credits to offset the adverse ecological impacts of their Project in our community.

The “Mitigation” section M-BIO-5 the DEIR states, “If operation of construction or excavation equipment is initiated within 500 feet of suitable habitat during the breeding seasons for the Coastal gnatcatcher (March 1 to August 15) nesting raptors (January 15 to July 15) or least Bell’s vireo (March 15 to September 15), pre-construction survey(s) shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine whether these species occur within the areas potentially impacted by noise....” I live across the street from Cottonwood, and even in my backyard in the residential development where I live, I have Coastal Gnatcatchers, Bell’s Vireo, and various raptors. If they’re in the development where I live, you can bet your bottom dollar they are also in Cottonwood. So, I hope the sand miners are planning to cease operation for 6 months every year from March through September! Or will they only do so, “to the extent feasible.” The answer to the latter is, “Yes,” they will only do so “to the extent feasible,” as determined by them.

For example: on page S-12, the DEIR acknowledges that, “indirect impacts related to noise to nesting gnatcatchers would be potentially significant.” For mitigation they claim, “Grading or clearing of vegetation within 500 feet of occupied Diegan coastal sage scrub during the breeding season of the coastal California gnatcatcher (March 1 to August 15) shall be avoided to the extent feasible.” Two sentences later they negate even this paltry assurance by stating, “If clearing or grading would occur within suitable habitat during the breeding season....a pre-construction survey shall be conducted....” So, they actually do plan to do grading and clearing of vegetation during the breeding season, they just plan to survey the area 72 hours

prior. What about the birds who don't arrive until 50 hours prior, or who had planned to nest in the area 50 hours subsequent to the commencement of operations and now can't settle there because of the work going on. Subsequent to stating this pretense of mitigation they conclude that the impact will be "Less than Significant."

How do the authors of the DEIR go from the admission that the sand mining operation will have "potentially significant" impact on the gnatcatcher habitat to concluding the impact will be "Less than Significant" with the only thing they really promise to do is conduct one survey 72 hours prior to commencing their destruction of that habitat? It's more Three Card Monte.

The only way to "mitigate" the impact on the avian wildlife mentioned in the report would be for the miners to shut down their operation for the designated 6 months of the year that the various mentioned at risk bird species nest. (Or not mine in that particular area, which is an option mentioned in Chapter 4, the "Project Alternatives" section—but that would do nothing to help wildlife in other areas where they would continue to mine) Mining 6 months a year would extend the operation and reclamation project to 24 years. And shutting down operations would not completely remove the negative impact, it would only offer some small mitigation to what would continue to be an utter environmental disaster. Short of agreeing to complete a 6-month shut down every year, the Project cannot honestly claim to have offered any mitigation at all.

The town in which I grew up was watershed for that county, and we had a pond in our back yard. I used to go to sleep at night listening to the bull frogs croak to each other and I woke up in the morning to the crow of the rooster across the street. But I was shocked when I moved to the hills of arid El Cajon to hear frogs in my back yard. I couldn't imagine how or why an amphibian would have hopped all the way up our dry, brushy hill. Yet there they were (and often are) and I could hear them croaking. I don't know if they are in the area due to the Sweetwater River, or the ponds on the golf course, or the muck pond in the mining and processing site below us. I don't know if they hopped up the hill because they sensed our irrigation water. I don't know if they are the nearly extinct California Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog. I just know they are there, because I hear them, and actually watched as one hopped across the back yard.

I also hear a pair of owls hooting in 4-hoot chains to each other at night into the day and what I believe are likely burrowing owls because they produce a sound like a rattle snake, which this owl is known to produce when trying to keep others from their nests. Maybe both vocalizations are from the same species of owl. Of the burrowing owl, the DEIR says in section 2.2-44, "The Project site consists of developed and abandoned golf course which have historically been subject to on-going disturbances such as mowing and human visitation. As such, the site does not support suitable burrowing owl habitat and no burrowing owl or burrowing owl sign was detected within the site during biological surveys. As such, the Project would have a less than significant impact on burrowing owl." Rubbish!

If we have a pair of burrowing owls in our four-acre yard that abuts an access route that SDG&E uses, in a development in which we live alongside other four acre yards, where people mow, and plant and irrigate and play music, party, and let their dogs out to run at all hours, I assure you there are many burrowing owls in the comparatively calm 251 acres of minimally used golf course across the road. And you can bet that this species that is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be disturbed by someone digging up a 40-ft deep ditch, from one end of 30 acres to another at a go, across a 251 acre site, all of which will be mined at some point or another over the span of at least a decade—if the miners get their way.

So, you've got to consider—if the authors of DEIR would lie so blatantly (I consider someone presenting an expert report misrepresenting the facts, whether knowingly or by choosing not to



know, as lying—and given that this report is being submitted for government permits for a profit making enterprise expected to bring in for the owners \$68,400,000, it might even be fraud) what else are they lying to you about?

Throughout the DEIR the authors equate the activity on this sparsely used golf course, and partially abandon course, which offer wildlife hundreds of acres of clear unobstructed habitat and 0 human activity in the dark of night; with the activity at the Proposed industrial site of heavy excavating and construction equipment, digging up 30 acres at a time, 40 ft deep, from one end to another, across 251 acres of land, that will have security lighting all night and barbed wire and other fencing!

Think about it. They are equating a few of old men shuffling across the course and hitting a golf ball for maybe a few hours in a day; to the massive excavation of that same course being bulldozed down 40 ft deep, all day long, for a decade! Are they for real? Do they expect you to buy that? I assure you if you were to dig up 30-40 acres, 40 ft deep where our 10 homes in Granite Ledge sit, we would have no burrowing owl and no other wildlife either!

In our yards we also have red shouldered hawks and other raptors, Coastal Gnatcatchers, Bell's Vireo, quail, road runners, mourning doves, humming birds, and other birds. Seasonally, we and our neighbors have mallards in our swimming pools. We have bats and Monarch and Swallowtail Butterflies, oodles of rattle snakes (probably driven into the yard by the blasting of the granite mountain and other disturbances of the land and air below, along with California Kings, Garters, and other snakes that I've yet to identify) alligator lizards and lizards with blue spots and not much distinct delineation of shape from neck to the beginning of the head, rabbits, a pack of coyote's, and the occasional mountain lions, among other animals. I sent you pictures of the coyotes and mountain lions in my June 29, 2021 email. There was even a deer in the yard when we first moved here in 2008, but the deer appear to have been driven away by development. Whatever we have here in our yards, be assured they have far more of in Cottonwood. It is adjacent a nature preserve and has a wildlife corridor passing through it, for God's sake!

If one genuinely wants to know which animals use the Cottonwood Golf Club, all one need do is set up cameras with picture and sound in numerous key locations and leave them up 24 hours a day for a year while the area is undisturbed. By the end of the year you will be able to hear and see which wildlife is currently using the Cottonwood site, how and when they are using it, and for what purposes. The miners have had control of the site for years, so why did they choose not to do that? One must conclude that they did not want to provide you with an accurate and meaningful report. If someone is only willing to have the site visually surveyed for wildlife for a few hours, for a few times, and they claim they can tell you all the animals that use the site, when they use it, and for what they use it, they're attempting to deceive you. I don't know if all the species I mentioned above are endangered or what, or how many more species are in the area, but I do believe all their lives deserve to be protected, and you can't do that if you don't even have a decent study that tells you what is there, when, and for what.

In the section on "Vector Control" the DEIR states, "During the wet season (generally October through March) the mining area, process settling ponds, and the stream would be visually inspected monthly by the operations staff for the presence of vectors." I fill my dogs' outdoor water bowls with filtered water multiple times a day—and yet, I have found larvae in the bowl if I have left it out overnight. The lifecycle of a mosquito is 8-10 days, so what good is a monthly visual check by operation's staff—particularly since they have let you know in the DEIR that they don't care enough to do the necessary inspection daily. And be aware, it is a lot easier for me to see larvae in my dogs' water bowl—than it would be to identify larvae in a settling pond.

Now, this is a draft report. They could come back to you with a final report that says they will check for larvae every day—but do you think they actually will? I don't. They have already demonstrated to me that they are willing to dissemble, misrepresent, and lie in a report that they know will be read by hundreds of people, discussed by multiple bodies in multiple meetings, analyzed and dissected numerous times prior to being awarded an MUP. What do you think they would be willing to do after they are awarded the MUP and no-one is watching? It has already cost the community legal fees to fight them, now when they don't have the MUP, how much do you think it will cost the community, the County, the State and the Tribes in legal fees after they are awarded an MUP, if they violate it? And if past behavior is a predictor of future behavior—and psychologists will tell you it's the best predictor there is—then I assure you, they will violate their agreement and dissemble, misrepresent and lie to get away with it.

Furthermore, bats are a wonderful way to control mosquito populations in open areas. However, Subchapter 2.2-30, in which they describe how they will protect (or not protect) the area wildlife, they state of the Mexican Long-tongued Bat, "Mexican long-tongued bat, CDFW Species of Special Concern in County Group 2 species, was not observed within the Project site but was determined to have a high potential to occur based [on] documented occurrences in Mt. Helix and El Cajon.... However, individuals would most likely utilize the surrounding residential neighborhoods for roosting foraging opportunities...."

No surprise they didn't see any bats there during the day. Bats are nocturnal. Equally of concern is the DEIR's cavalier approach to destroying the "ornamental plantings that could provide suitable foraging habitat, and buildings associated with the golf course [that] could provide potential roosting habitat," In other words, they say, "Yes, this Species of Concern in County Group 2, is most likely present—but they can go somewhere else." This is short-sighted as nature has a way of arranging things and wrecking revenge on those who disrupt its arrangements. In this case it could be a plague of mosquitoes and West Nile Virus.

Regarding rodents, they say they will use traps. Traps often contain poison, which the rodents eat and then run off to die in the woods. And who do they think will eat the rodents before they die? The owls, the hawks, the coyotes, any hungry animal will eat that poison laden rodent. An animal caught a mouse in my yard the other day and ate its stomach. Fortunately, I don't use poison.

Subchapter 3.1.4.1 sates of the existing conditions, "Rodents that occur on the property are controlled using physical traps rather than the use of rodenticides. This prevents potential impacts to other animal species and avoids pollution of ground or surface water." That is how rodents on the property are trapped now, and the authors of the DEIR take great care in delineating that. They clearly know what one should do if one is to use a deadly trap. However, when it comes to what the Proposed Project will do, they simply state they will use "traps if rodents are observed." They do not delineate regarding their own behavior whether they will use catch and release traps, mechanical traps or poison traps. Why do they detail what the current system is, and decline to commit to using the same system? I consider that maybe they want officials to remember the type of traps currently in use so when they see the word "trap" again regarding the same purpose they will assume the same type of trap. I would assume nothing benevolent from these folks.

If the Proposed Project uses poison or mechanical traps, how will they keep other critters from getting in them and getting killed? It is one thing to put traps around the club house and restaurant, which is a limited area by the road and parking lot where wild animals may not frequent as much; and an entirely different thing to put traps throughout vast open acreage.

If the Project were not to move forward and the site were given back to the wildlife (at least at night) then the wild animals would eat the rodents. Humans may hate rodents, but animals love

them. When we moved into the area in 2008 we had rabbits all over the place. Some actually built their warren inside our fencing for safety and used to hang out with my dogs who had been raised with pet rabbits. On the other side of the fence, I would find bits of fur and cotton tail and blood and coyote scat with unprocessed rabbit hair mixed in. We have no more rabbits in the back yard and the coyote scat is mostly seeds now. The coyotes are lucky if they can find a rodent to eat for a bit of protein. There is so much development in the area now the coyotes are being cornered and starved.

The DEIR states that unleashed dogs will not be allowed on the property, but we in the neighborhood are just as concerned about hungry coyotes and bob cats eating our dogs as we are our dogs eating the wildlife. Many of our precious pets have lost their lives to wild animals here. The wild animals need to be provided an additional extended area to roam and eat wild animals unmolested, and dogs need a large fenced in dog park to run.

The DEIR also states they will control vegetation in the area with herbicide. They do say the herbicide will be compatible with aquatic use—but sorry—I eat organic produce and I like my wildlife to be able do the same. That may sound highfalutin to some, but animals have evolved over the millennia eating an organic diet, and any disruption of that is a disruption that could have deadly consequences and must not be glossed over.

On page 1-13 the report states, “Seed and planting would occur at times when winds are relatively calm, between November and February...” The strong Santa Ana winds typically occur from September to May which is right in the middle of what they claim to be the time when winds are calm. In an earlier section of the report, discussing “Aggregate Processing” they state, “Sediment would be stockpiled parallel to the prevailing wind....” Have you ever heard the cliché, “They change like the wind.” That’s a cliché for a reason; the wind changes. These stockpiles are elsewhere described as being 25 ft high. So what are they going to pick up and move the 25 ft high stockpiles of sediment every time the wind changes? Who do they think they are fooling? The Santa Ana’s blow so much toxic dust up from the mining and rock processing site below my home, at times I have been bed ridden for months on end with barely the breath to make it to the kitchen let alone to the doctor. Stuck helpless on my back, I experienced my dreams and opportunities and all that I had worked for slip pass me. One of my neighbors has to sleep wearing a C-pap every night. The mining operations below us at Hester’s Granite Co/Robertson’s & J Cloud also claim to mitigate dust by spraying it with water.

I invite you to view the pictures I’ve provided and read the quotes I provided from the report on mining and human health. Do you think that amount of toxic dust from the mining, excavation and processing at the existing operations could be controlled by a water truck and hose—even if they tried? The dust coming from the sand mining operation would cover more territory and be even greater. Do any of you care enough to do anything? On page 2.2-42, they claim the Project would, “...include fugitive dust control measures to minimize dust emissions and meet applicable dust control requirements. As part of the Proposed Project, active construction and extraction areas, unpaved surfaces, and stockpiles would be watered to minimize dust generation: all exposed soil would be watered a minimum of twice per day.”

Oh, that should do! On a dry, 98 degree day in East County, spraying surfaces twice a day should keep them nice and wet and the dust controlled! If spraying surfaces and 25 ft high mounds of overburden twice a day meets “dust control requirements,” the County better change its requirements.

The DEIR section “Changes to Visual Character and Quality and Viewer Response,” states that maturity of the site would be roughly 15 years after reclamation for each subphase. In the section titled “Post Reclamation,” in Section 2.1 they acknowledge that in some areas maturation could actually take 20 years. Subchapter 3.1.6 states, “Long term changes within

the Project would contribute positively to the valued views, and trees and shrubs planted in accordance with the revegetation plan would improve the visual character and the quality of the site once maturity is reached (approximately five to seven years post-installation) and ultimately would be consistent with applicable goals and policies of the COS Element.” If I were to believe that I would have to believe that after 5 years, I mean 15 years, I mean 7 years, I mean 20 years...., Oh, heck, I don’t know what I would have to believe—other than someone is willing to say anything to get what they want—and leave others to deal with the consequences. I guess one can’t be entirely surprised, what with \$68,400,000 in the balance. Too bad no one is holding up a boom box blasting, Peter Gabriel’s, “In Your Eyes,” in the background, as in the scene from Cameron Crowes’ film, “Say Anything.”

Given that 12 years is allowed for the project plus reclamation, and using the above 15 year estimation for maturation; that would mean the area would reach maturation in 27 to 32 years. I’m 66 years-old. Neither of my parents made it to 80 years. If I have a similar life span as my parents and their parents the area should reach maturation roughly 15-20 years after I’m dead. If the mine only operates six months of the year in order to provide some meager protection of wildlife, that would become, 39 to 44 years. I didn’t move into this area to have it start looking nice 15-44 years after I’m dead. I like how Cottonwood looks now and I want it to stay that way—at least until I’m dead.

As for younger residents who moved into this area to raise their families, the site would have finally reached maturation some years after their youngest kids have left home and they themselves have likely retired or died. By then, if still alive, they may be ready to move into a smaller home in a cheaper area. In the meantime they and their children (and possibly their parents) will have suffered through the toxic dust, noise, ugliness, traffic... for over a decade and there is really no way to guarantee when the work would be completed. After all, if by the end of 10 years the miners have only managed to dig 20 feet down over the last one or two 30 acre sections, is the County really going to say, “That’s it. You’re done.” Or is the County going to grant an extension for them to complete the work. If after 2 years of reclamation there are still 40 acres or more of a 30-40 foot pit, is the County really going to say, “Time’s up. Can’t fill it. Got to go.” All those pages upon pages of what the sand miners would plant.... are meaningless for those in the area now. And yet the DEIR concludes in section 3.1.6 “As indicated above, the proposed Project would be compliant with the majority of the General Plan goals and policies applicable to the Project.... Accordingly, impacts associated with the goals and policies of the County General Plan would be **less than significant.**” (They, again, write in bold.)

Crucially, regarding Native American cultural and archeological artifacts and human remains in the digging site, the DEIR states on S-23 that both an Archeological Monitor and a Native American Monitor will monitor work. They also say that the County Archeologist and Kumeyaay Native American monitors will be in consultation. Who pays for that? Do the Kumeyaay and other Native American monitors have to volunteer their time over the 12 year period to make sure these sand miners don’t desecrate or destroy their artifacts? How can they be there every day, every minute to effectively monitor 251 acres that are being dug 40 feet deep with heavy equipment? Are they going to be able to inspect each bulldozer load as it rises from the earth, as well as the ground it leaves below, before the next load is lifted? Are they going to be able to comb the ground first? How about the County Archeologist how can that person be there day after day every minute? You’ve seen archeologists out there at their sites with their toothbrushes, gingerly brushing away the earth. How long do you think it would take to carefully brush away 251 acres, 40 ft deep? Are taxpayers to pay to have a County Archeologist present at the site during all working hours?

The DEIR states, on S-24, “The program shall include reasonable efforts to preserve (avoid) unique cultural resources or Sacred Sites...” Who determines what’s reasonable? The Kumeyaay and other Native American tribes, along with the community have already declared this entire operation unreasonable and are currently giving their all to stop it. Is anyone listening? Yet, despite not explicitly documenting who will be paid, by whom, and how much, when and for how long; and despite only agreeing to do what they themselves might deem “reasonable,” at the time, the DEIR concludes on page S-29 that the effects on Native American cultural and archeological artifacts and human remains will be “Less than Significant.” They don’t even touch on the impact on the lives of those actively involved and personally invested in dealing with this mining operation while doing their best to preserve their treasured artifacts in a site they consider sacred and the miners consider appropriate for destruction.

The writers of the DEIR told you what they see when they look at Cottonwood Golf Club. Want to know what I see? I see a place where right now, with no further delay or cost, the County can allow the Native American tribes to establish a research center. One of those structures on the site might serve as an initial place from which to organize. I see a place where right now, with no further delay or cost, the County could extend the wildlife preserve and open space. I see a place where right now, with no further delay, the San Diego County Water Authority could continue to work with The Water Conservation Garden and Cuyamaca College providing appropriate plant life on the site similar to the work of Kate Sessions. I see a place in the less manicured section with lots of trees that would be perfect for a summer camp for the County children, and where both the Native American Community and Cuyamaca faculty and students could work with campers, passing on their wisdom to the next generation while honing their own teaching and leadership skills. I also see a place where both the Native American Community and Cuyamaca College and others could provide outdoor lectures and concerts and theatre to the general community. I see a place where existing golf cart paths could be opened for those who want to use the paths for walking or running or cycling, or wheelchairs or golf carts. I see a place where we could fence off a large dog park for off-leash use now that thousands of people with pets have moved into homes with tiny yards in the area. I see a place in the club house and restaurant that is still there, where someone could operate dining and bring back those lovely Sunday brunches under the big white wedding tent they used to have by the pond with the piano man playing in the background. I really miss that! I see people getting married there, and having commencement parties and reunions there.

Sections 2.2-67 and 2.2-80 mention, “The applicant shall dedicate 142.8 acres of biological open space to be managed by a long-term manager approved by the County in accordance with a Resource Management Plan.” I think it is a good idea to keep “142.8 acres of biological open space to be managed by a long-term manager approved by the County.” However, I think the County should purchase that land under eminent domain and hire someone who is qualified to both manage the site and serve as an animal control officer. The County could also provide the person one of the structures currently on the site to live in. Or, even better, if the County also buys the land projected for Ivanhoe Ranch (which is not zoned for the spot) they could provide the historic Cliff May built house for the animal control, open space manager. At this time, El Cajon does not have an animal control officer headquartered in the area. They rely on an officer to come over from Bonita. (The Humane Society officers do not serve this area).

To illustrate what a terrible problem this is, allow me to share that this summer, one of our dogs who had received rattle snake aversion training, alerted us to a rattler coiled and ready to strike at the edge of our pool. I called animal control and it took her over two hours to arrive—despite the fact that I was repeatedly told by dispatch that she was on the road and en route. It had taken me less than that to drive home from Palomar Mountain the weekend prior. I was told by dispatch to keep my eye on the rattler until she arrived, which I did until after an hour or so the sprinklers came on and the rattler took off into an adjacent shrub. When the officer finally

arrived in her outfit, with her plastic bucket and pole, I brought her over to the area where the snake once one. I told her how it had been coiled and asked her if she wanted to see the picture (which I have included in this email for you). She said, “No.” I asked her if she wanted to check by the shrub to see if it was still there. She said, “No.” She just wanted to leave.

Clearly, it did not take this officer 2 hours to drive from Bonita to El Cajon. Apparently, she is afraid of snakes and wanted to make sure the snake was gone before she arrived. That may have been wise since she clearly did not know what she was doing. She told me next time, instead of calling animal control, when I saw a coiled snake I should take one of my big empty clay flower pots and put it over the snake because when it is coiled, it is just sunning itself and won't strike. Actually, the striking position for a rattlesnake is the coiled position. Even my dog knew that—but he probably received more training than she did. Furthermore, big clay flowerpots have big clay holes in the bottom that snakes can crawl out of. This gal couldn't tell a snake from a flowerpot, so I don't know what the County was thinking in hiring her to serve us—but clearly we need someone who knows what they have to do and isn't afraid to do it. The perfect person for that would be someone qualified to manage open space in a rural area and provide animal control. The perfect place for that person to operate from in El Cajon, would be Cottonwood. If the current owners bought the 280 acres for \$6M, at \$21,428 an acre, then the County should use eminent domain and pay them \$3,059,918.40 for the said 142.8 acres, which the current owners can't legitimately do anything lucrative with anyway because sand mining there is in conflict with the County General Plan and the regional plan for the area. The remainder of the land could also be purchased by the County for the same price, perhaps for the Community uses I identify above—also through eminent domain. If, despite having just been award a lot of infrastructure money from the Federal Government, the Board of Supervisors still does not want to spring a few million to save East County, perhaps something can be done in cooperation with The Trust For Public Land, ([tpl.org](http://tpl.org)).

Of the the purposes I propose above, the three I perceive as most urgent, are preserving the open space (under the advisement of the Native American Tribes, Fish and Wildlife, the Water Authority, and the appropriate departments of Cuyamaca College), the Native American Research Center, and the Cottonwood Day Camp. Between the Native Americans and the Cuyamaca faculty and students, they should be able to teach the campers the difference between a rattler and a flower pot—and what to do and not do with each. I've already discussed the open space in some detail. Allow me to now discuss the additional two possibilities. (I know you're tired of reading, but you have just consumed almost 600 pages of bull chips submitted by the miners—so please allow me a couple pages more to describe truly worthy uses of the site).

In that less manicured portion one could put tents on platforms under the shade of beautiful trees for a children's summer camp. (Are those the 67 trees the miners want to chop down so they can gouge 40 feet into the earth below while spreading toxic dust through the region? They may as well bury us all down there now.) That Western Lakes Course the DEIR so abuses would be just perfect to raise up a bunch of junior golfers—the next Phil Mickelson (or better) could be in the bunch. There is even a horse ranch down the road for those who want riding lessons for part of their day. When I was a camper, I learned horseback riding and also riflery. If riflery is to be considered for the camp, there is a shooting range across the street from the aforementioned stables. Irrigation would not be required to maintain the area to the degree necessary for a children's camp, and goats could be brought in to keep vegetation in check. The goats would no doubt be a highlight of many a child's summer.

Given that the area could also connect to the walking trail that runs along the wildlife preserve parallel Jamacha to the rear of The McGrath Family Y (where there is a large swimming pool and summer activities for children in a small spot adjacent the parking lot they share with the strip mall, and cinema) perhaps the McGrath family would be interested in actualizing my vision

of a genuine rural summer camp in the neighborhood for County children. (As some of you know, I spent my teen years as a Y-Camp counsellor. Best summer job ever! And in San Diego, it need not just be for summer.)

If faculty and students from nearby Cuyamaca College want to work at the camp as administrators and counsellors in training (CIT), and camp counsellors, they could perhaps also work with the campers on portions of the open space, as they teach about preservation of indigenous plant life and water resources. Being able to teach children in such a beautiful low pressure environment, could also be a way for many young people to discover their own love of teaching, and refine their skills, for a possible career in a school or College.

Since the golf course was installed on land that had belonged to the tribes. The children could also learn of the cultural and historical significance of the site. Perhaps some of the tribes might be interested in teaching the children about San Diego's Native American roots, as well as the Native American tradition of respecting wildlife. This would honor the generations who have lived there and been buried there. When in Connecticut, I have enjoyed visiting The Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center. You can take a virtual tour at their online site to learn more. Though that museum is huge, perhaps such a research center could find a home on a portion of the existing Cottonwood Golf Club site, with a museum nearby. The Mashantucket Pequot Museum is located adjacent the Foxwoods Resort Casino.

Establishing a summer camp at Cottonwood would enhance the existing businesses and community, while sharing that community with children from all over the County who might not otherwise be able to spend their summers in a rural setting. Given the 30 minute drive from downtown San Diego and 10-15 minutes from downtown El Cajon and La Mesa, that site could bring children of all backgrounds from all over the County to learn, play, develop skills and make new friends. Summer camp often gives children who may not have been stellar in school the opportunity to shine and accept leadership roles that academic settings and those who are set in their opinions of them might not provide.

What the miners see as "unmaintained and unirrigated," I see as the optimum place to plant the seeds for a cohesive and respectful intercultural generation of San Diegans to lead us into the future. We just need a place to maintain them with training and irrigate them with love. Maybe the miners never had the opportunity to sing camp songs on the bus with kids from all over their county, or learn how to lash tables and build camp fires for s'mores, swim and shoot arrows, identify birds and insects.... Maybe if they had, they would demonstrate greater respect for nature and community. Among the San Diegans who have received nationwide focus over the past year, one was shot breaking into the Capitol and another was arrested with bomb making material outside the Supreme Court. Enough! We need to invest in a better way.

The land on which Cottonwood Golf Club currently sits is a potential children's paradise! It is also potentially a place where residents from all over the County, and others from all over the world could come to enjoy the Native American culture and history, nature, recreation, refreshment, seminars, concerts, and theatre. I hope the Board of Supervisors will begin discussions to actualize these superior projects immediately.

As mentioned earlier, the community was insulted and irate in response to the DEIR. The authors, instead of sticking to the facts, repeatedly dipped into fantasy. Because the authors cannot deny the fact that the industrial sand mine site they propose will be down right toxic, and ugly, and noisy, and big, and create lots of illness, and traffic and danger..., they created alternate facts, an alternate reality, as they tried to manipulate the reader to imagine a different picture, even attempting to create a sort of hypothetical clueless caricature of a typical East County resident on a hypothetical day that's meant to represent every day over the next 12 plus years. Synthesizing their commentary as a whole, It's as if they want you to imagine:

“Yes, the sand mine is big and ugly but fortunately: It’s a foggy day so Bob can’t even see the mine as he begins his commute. Work has been tough these past six years and it is only going to get worse over the next six. Bob is on auto-pilot as he drives this commute, day after day. His mind isn’t even on the road or scenery—and really there’s no significant scenery to distract him. Bob’s mind is in the office, and on getting his little daughter, Maria, to a Catholic school she attends in a town en route to his work. Her mother, Helen, insisted the girl not spend all day in the public school she used to attend in the neighborhood. Bob’s not sure why. He sure misses Helen, though. He wonders if perhaps he wasn’t giving her concerns enough attention. He tried to be attentive. Or maybe he was being too attentive. Maybe he was smothering her, he considered. After all, she screamed, “I can’t breathe!” as she slammed the front door behind her and got in her car and drove away.

Bob drives 45 mph, at 8:30 AM to get to work by nine. Despite the fact that the entire community tries it’s best to get everything that will involve using the local roads done before 9 AM and after 3:30 PM (to avoid traffic from the trucks and caregivers picking up children at school) there are no other cars or trucks on the road. You see Bob is truly blessed. Like Moses with the sea, all obstacles part for him. In fact, all obstacles part for all the drivers on Willow Glen Drive, and Steele Canyon Road, and Jamacha Road. These are magic roads—ever since those good sand miners began their invisible sand mine there. The community had been really worried about the sand mine coming to town. They’d had very bad experiences with another mine on Willow Glen, and they had heard of another neighborhood having very bad experiences with sand mines—especially with this particular owner. But fortunately, all that worry and consternation was for nothing. The sand miners were right. The negative impact of the sand mine is really less than significant in nearly every way, and in the ways that it is moderately significant it doesn’t really matter—Bob can’t even remember what they were now. Thank God for amnesia.

Bob is a good parent to his daughter, Maria, and he tries to be an even better parent ever since her mother left three years ago. He brings Maria to Hilton Head Park on Saturday mornings before dropping her off with her mother for the weekend. Her mother had to go back to work to pay for the little apartment she now has downtown, so she couldn’t bring Maria with her. Bob pictures Helen in her charming apron, happy to get her career going again as a barista at Starbucks. It’s a good strong company with lots of opportunity for an ambitious young woman, and Helen barely looks her 42 years.

Parks can be risky paces these days so Bob doesn’t take an eye off Maria for a moment. Yes, he sees the swing seat itself, the chain that’s attached to it, but that’s all. Otherwise he’s just intensely focused on his hands reaching out to touch his child’s back, over and over again, almost hypnotically, as she laughs and giggles on the swing. They walk back to the car, just focused on each other. They are so in tune with each other, it’s as if they have blinders on. They see nothing as they natter away about insignificant stuff. The kind of stuff kids talk about.

Bob contemplates getting some grown-up alone time after he drops Maria off. He considers walking down Steele Canyon to Campo (otherwise known as the rural portion of the 94) and maybe stopping for a slice at Fillipi’s Pizza Grotto before heading back home. But unfortunately, he sighs, there are no sidewalks on those country roads, so to walk them would be unthinkable. He sure wishes the County would put in sidewalks so pedestrians could actually use those roads. Maybe those kind sand miners will put sidewalks in before they finish.

Now that Bob thinks of it, about a decade ago he heard from someone he met once at a party who knew someone who said someone told them the trails around McGinty Mountain were gorgeous. Bob had been living in the area over 30 years and had never tried the trail. He decided he’d get up early Sunday morning and give it a shot to take his mind off his troubles at



work. Fortunately, Sunday was another foggy day. Every day has been foggy since the sand miners came to town. It must be God's way of controlling the dust. Or maybe the miles of fog are created by the water truck and hose the miners use twice a day on-site. Amazing how so little water usage can control all that dust that would otherwise be rising from the 40 foot deep ditch over 30 acres a pop on hundreds of acres of land, and the 25 ft high mounds of sediment stockpiles, and the 50 year reserve of aggregate. But then it's really not much at any given moment, Bob read in the Project report. He's never seen it himself because it's masked by that lovely mesh the miners have wrapped around the roads and Bob has never ventured higher than the Project's street level such that he would have viewed the site from above. Maybe, he really does need that mountain hike, Bob contemplates.

And Bob is right. He is the only person on the trail, and it is providing him the adult alone time he craved. The winding trail offers him a variety of beautiful views of mountainsides, and wild flowers and sage brush. When he rounds the bend he can barely see the mining site and excavation equipment through the fog, and since it's more than .05 miles away it really isn't visible at all. Anyway, every time he rounds the bend again that vague image of the site disappears from his mind. It must be the amnesia he's had since the miners came. Residents had gone on and on about how if the miners came the community would be breathing the toxic silica dust the mine would generate, but they were all wrong. This is fairy dust that helps you forget everything unpleasant. Ah, Bob said to himself as he breathed deeply and took in the site of the fog from the mountain. The overall negative impact of that sand mine is really less than significant. Actually, it is a blessing in disguise!" Then Bob woke up and realized he was dreaming an episode from the Twilight Zone of his youth. Seems his subconscious has been thinking of the Twilight Zone a lot lately.

Normally, I try to only read things written by brilliant people of exemplary moral character. Therefore, reading the nearly 600 pages of redundant subterfuge in the DEIR presented on behalf of the sand miners was painful for me. This was especially so because someone whom I know and would like to think better of is deeply involved, and others whom I know who oppose the mining won't allow yard signs at their businesses for fear of alienating those involved. In one case the business was personally confronted by a miner after they had a yard sign put up —so they took it down.

I truly feel for people who look at those 251 acres of Cottonwood Golf Club and only see a place to dig a 40 ft deep hole from one end to the other. I won't tell you what I feel— but I do feel. When I was a child I believed the Pollyanna trope that all people are really alike and we all really want the same things. People I trusted told me that. Time and experience has knocked that snot of me. The truth is, some of us are interested in achieving the optimum common good, and others are only interested in achieving what they think is their own optimum good. There are Putins and there are Navalnys in this world. I pray there are enough Navalnys in our government to effectively counter the Putins.

If you would like me to recommend to you a really good book, I recommend the 291-page (including notes) "Corruptible: Who Gets Power And How It Changes Them," by Brian Klass. It's half the length of the DEIR, and actually worth reading. Enjoy!

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of these important matters that have already had dire consequences for this community. Any help that you can provide to protect us from this oncoming danger would be greatly appreciated. Stay safe, and well, and happy, and healthy.

Blessings to you and yours,

Devorah Ann Fox, PsyD

