

Noise

It appears from the EIR consultant bid that noise will be considered relative to the ambient background levels. Huasna residents went to great expense to have a sound level assessment done and we request that the EIR consultant use the data from that study as a baseline for the very low ambient noise levels present in the Huasna Valley. We also request that project noise impacts be considered relative to the ambient background levels and not just relative to the county noise ordinance.

The background noise levels in Huasna are not like background noises in the city. Our background noises are birds, frogs, coyotes, livestock, the wind, and an occasional plane overhead, car on the road, or tractor. On many cold, still nights you can literally hear nothing. The introduction of constant industrial noise - large electric motors and high capacity propane furnaces running 24/7 and regular tanker truck traffic on the road - will change the rural, agricultural character of the Huasna Valley.

We live in a valley with amphitheater-like acoustics. Under the right conditions you can hear people talking a mile away and hear a rifle shot echo six or seven times, down one side of the valley and back up the other side. During summer weekend evenings we can hear the Santa Maria Speedway as though it was just up the road.

Given the unique acoustics of the valley, we would like the EIR to include an analysis of atmospheric conditions and their effect on the propagation of project-related noise. Such a study should use actual atmospheric measurements and data from the Huasna Valley and not from an obscure meteorologic station miles away. Results of such a study could also be applied to the issue of odor and residents' concern regarding settling of cold air and entrapment of odors in our pocket valley.

Acoustic monitoring should be put in place at several sensitive receptors to measure the effectiveness of any mitigations proposed to reduce noise to insignificant levels.