

Dear Mr. Olivera:

Following are my comments regarding the Revised Initial Study Summary for the Las Pilitas quarry project.

Page 4, Aesthetics:

Page 7, Air Quality:

The checklist discusses aesthetic impacts as they pertain only to the quarry site. Air quality impacts are addressed primarily at the quarry site. There is no discussion regarding aesthetic or air quality impacts on the town of Santa Margarita. It is completely unrealistic to take the position that a daily street-traffic increase of 400 large gravel trucks rolling through a neighborhood does not have a detrimental impact on the town's aesthetics or air quality.

Santa Margarita Elementary School and a small County park are located at the intersection of El Camino Real and State Route 58. Nearly all of the proposed quarry-truck traffic must pass through that intersection less than 600 feet from the school and immediately adjacent to the children's playground in the park.

In a 10-hour day the equivalent of one large truck every 1.5 minutes will rumble through this small neighborhood. Each truck will produce engine, tire, brake and chassis noises, dust, diesel fumes and substantial ground vibration. Ignoring or minimizing these aesthetic and air quality impacts seriously undermines the efficacy of this checklist.

By any measure, more than just a handful of loaded, dual-trailer gravel trucks will negatively impact the tiny community of Santa Margarita. The impacts of literally hundreds of additional gravel trucks rolling through town must be realistically and honestly addressed in the EIR.

Page 25, Transportation/Circulation:

This portion of the checklist (item 'c') inaccurately characterizes the proposed project as having an "Insignificant Impact" on roadway safety. It is clearly obvious that an additional 400 daily gravel truck trips on this section of SR 58 will have a significant impact on traffic safety, especially to bicyclists.

SR 58 from El Camino Real to the proposed quarry site is a narrow, hilly, winding road with no improvements for bicyclists. Indeed, traffic speeds are high, there are several blind corners, pavement edges abruptly drop off and cyclists must ride with extra caution while using this section of highway. Traffic passing cyclists must typically use the oncoming lane to allow for safe maneuvering and separation between vehicles. Large vehicles passing one another in opposite directions take nearly all of the highway width, leaving little or no room for bicycle riders.

It is inconceivable that SR 58 will continue to be considered a viable bicycle route if this quarry project is approved. An increase of an additional 400 large truck trips per day on this highway will prove fatal to bicycling (and, I fear, some bicyclists) on this road unless major bicycle-appropriate design improvements are made from Santa Margarita to the

Following are my comments regarding the Revised Initial Study Summary for the Las Pallas quarry project.

Page 4, Assessment
Page 5, Air Quality

The checklist discusses sensitive receptors as they pertain only to the quarry site. Air quality impacts are addressed primarily at the quarry site. There is no discussion regarding sensitive receptors on the town of Santa Margarita. It is completely unrealistic to take the position that a daily street-traffic increase of 400 trucks per day would not have a detrimental impact on the town's aesthetics or air quality.

Santa Margarita Elementary School and a small County park are located at the intersection of El Camino Real and State Route 58. Nearly all of the proposed quarry truck traffic must pass through that intersection less than 600 feet from the school and immediately adjacent to the children's playground in the park.

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By any measure, more than just a handful of loaded, dual-trailer gravel trucks will negatively impact the tiny community of Santa Margarita. The impacts of literally hundreds of additional gravel trucks rumbling through town must be realistically and honestly addressed in the EIR.

Page 58, Transportation/Restrictions

The portion of the checklist (item 'c') inaccurately characterizes the proposed project as having an "insignificant impact" on roadway safety. It is clearly obvious that an additional 400 daily gravel truck trips on this section of SR 58 will have a significant impact on traffic safety, especially for bicyclists.

SR 58 from El Camino Real to the proposed quarry site is a narrow, trilly, winding road with no improvements for bicyclists. Indeed, traffic speeds are high, there are several blind corners, pavement edges abruptly drop off and cyclists must ride with extra caution while using this section of highway. Traffic passing cyclists must typically use the oncoming lane to allow for safe maneuvering and separation between vehicles. Large vehicles passing one another in opposite directions take nearly all of the highway width, leaving little or no room for bicycle riders.

It is inconceivable that SR 58 will continue to be considered a viable bicycle route if this quarry project is approved. An increase of an additional 400 large trucks per day on this highway will prove fatal to bicycling (and, I fear, some bicyclists) on this road unless major bicycle-appropriate design improvements are made from Santa Margarita to the

proposed quarry site. As an avid cyclist, I believe the only safe-cycling approach would be to redesign and reconstruct SR 58 to comply with Class II bicycleway standards from El Camino Real to the quarry site.

Item 'g' in this checklist also inaccurately characterizes this project as having an insignificant impact on existing policies supporting alternative transportation. This section of SR 58 has been specifically designated by SLOCOG as a bicycle "Recreational Route" and is used by many cyclists. The massive increase in large truck traffic on this narrow road will discourage bicycling on this section of SR 58. If this project is approved without major Class II bikeway improvements, SLOCOG's policy will be rendered at best, irrelevant, at worst dangerous.

Again, the impacts of hundreds of additional large trucks using this section of SR 58 each day must be realistically and honestly addressed in the EIR.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas Marks
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c: SLOCOG (slocog@slocog.org)
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