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Water Quality. There is no water quality issue if you have no water and no water is what this project may bring to many residents of the Moreno Creek basin.

The Moreno Creek basin or drainage is approximately a seven square mile area that flows into the Salinas River on the Oster property at the Salinas River Bridge. Moreno Creek and its many tributaries are mostly an underground creek system that provides the water source for the residents of the basin. There are approximately eighty residential units in the basin and a fewer number of wells. The wells in the basin generally provide enough water for residential use but not enough for any large-scale irrigation especially in the upper portions of the basin. The majority of basin's wells go down to and into the bedrock, below the underground creek flow, to access this water source. Few wells, if any, go below the bedrock that supports the creek bed; thus, the well water levels are subject to the whims of the yearly rainfall amounts and tend to drop significantly during drought periods.

The applicant estimates the project will use up to 20,000 gallons of water a day just to operate and control dust without, they claim, even washing the products produced by the mine. The use of even that amount of water may cause a catastrophic environmental impact on the residents of the Moreno Creek basin. The Oster property well site is at the mouth of the Moreno Creek basin and it may be capable of drawing the estimated amount of water. However, the use of any well or wells in the Moreno drainage to withdraw that amount of water, even if they could, would surely have the impact of sucking the water levels down to an unsatisfactory or marginal level for many residents.

Without water, property values would fall, quality of life would be strained, and the biological environment itself would be taxed. It is highly questionable that there is another reliable water resource below the current source. Even if there were another water resource below the bedrock, it is doubtful that all the current property owners/residents could afford the expense of drilling a new deep well.

The EIR must address the impact the project's water use will have on its neighbors or it must not be allowed to go forward. There needs to be a comprehensive hydrological study done of the Moreno Creek drainage to determine if the applicant can safely remove the estimated amount of water from the drainage without detrimental damage to any other residents of the drainage.

The EIR should also address the impact of the project using more water than its current estimate to cover the likely probability that the applicant will have to wash much of its product to make it commercially viable.

If the EIR cannot guarantee that the proposed project's water use will not impact the residents of the Moreno Creek basin, then it should require an alternate water source for the project be investigated and developed. The project has access to the Salinas River underground drainage

(which already has over-draft problems near the bridge) and it may have access to the water source in the deep aquifer that the Santa Margarita Ranch said they are using for their grape acreage irrigation.

Finally, the EIR should determine how any water migration factors, that may be imposed on the project, are to be monitored, controlled, and enforced.

Aesthetics. There is absolutely no way that this project can be “dressed up.” I have been driving Hwy 58 almost daily for seventeen years and I had to chuckle at the scoping meeting when I found out that the tree growing project along the north side of the highway and west of the Salinas River bridge was to mitigate the view of the Hanson Quarry. I always thought it was some Cal Poly Ag project. I will admit that some of the trees are now doing a partial job of blocking the view of the quarry and the lovely view of the Ranch and panorama to the north. However, there are still huge gaps along the route that allow good views of the Hanson Quarry, (which I appreciate, as it gives me a way to monitor how the quarry is progressing,) and keep the scenic view to the north.

This project is right on the highway. They may be able to “dress up” the projects entrance and some of the facilities with a nice rock wall, but to hide excavation of the hill adjacent to the highway is going to take some very tall trees. To mitigate the view of the entire operation as you pass east bound over the Salinas River Bridge will take a twenty foot high solid wall attached to the north side of the bridge.

Air Quality. It is going to be extremely difficult to mitigate the impact of air quality on my property and neighborhood. Contrary to the applicants claim that the project is surrounded by Ag land, the lower Parkhill Road area is mostly Rural-Residential. Most of the properties contain more than one residence. There are over seventy mail boxes on lower Parkhill Road and some of the old time residents still do not have mail boxes preferring P.O. boxes in town. I would estimate that there are over eighty residential units within the area. This area is within two and one half miles of the quarry site and almost directly east and down wind from the proposed site. The prevailing wind and the almost daily local afternoon wind blows up Parkhill Road and into the Moreno Creek basin after passing the quarry site.

The dust and particulates generated by the removal of the overburden and the mining operation will be extremely difficult to contain on site. It is obvious that the residents of the Moreno Creek basin are going to be highly impacted. Additional study needs to be done on the number of rural residents that will be affected not only in the Moreno Creek basin but up Calf Canyon along Highway 58 and the upper reaches of Parkhill Road and any other areas that lie downwind of the proposed site.

The further impact of recycling concrete and asphalt needs to be specifically addressed. The processing of these products will most likely introduce very small particulate matter and possibly toxic substances into the air. It needs to be determined just what impact this part of the applicant’s proposal will have on air quality for the local residents.

Biological Resources. One biological factor that needs to be addressed is related to the Water Quality issue above. Lowering the water table in the Moreno Creek drainage basin by removing up to 20,000 gallons of water a day will have an impact on the remaining oak trees (and also the mature introduced trees) that inhabit parts of the oak savanna areas on the relatively level areas of the dry Moreno Creek bed. A lower water table could be potentially fatal to some of the trees and at a minimum, put them under stress and susceptible to increased fire danger.

The increased water usage could also harm the basin's hillside ecosystems by potentially speeding underground water flow into the creek bed and thus drying out and damaging the entire Moreno Creek ecosystem.

Noise. The prevailing wind and especially the afternoon wind blows from the quarry site up Parkhill Road. Noise seems to travel from the west to east in our area and often we can hear the train traffic noises as the trains move along beside El Camino Real.

The only real noise that I attributed to the Hanson Quarry was, it seemed an almost daily noontime explosion, which we have not heard for the past several years. It was very evident and had an adverse affect on our animals. I am not sure what the Hanson quarry has done over the last few years; either, they abandoned the use of explosives or they can now use them very quietly.

Transportation. I will only comment on two items because I am sure you will get enough comments on this factor.

Sight lines on Highway 58 to the proposed entrance of this facility are marginal at best. They may meet the required minimum distance but what happens if you subtract the length of one or two double truck and trailers waiting to turn into the facility from the required sight line distance.

The alternate route into this quarry facility is by the Hanson Quarry right-of-way through Santa Margarita Ranch land. This route is straight, relatively flat, no hills to climb or brake on and is dedicated to one thing: the movement of trucks into and out of a quarry. This route would also reduce the number of trucks going through Santa Margarita by having north bound trucks use the Santa Barbara Road 101 on/off ramps and the sight lines on El Camino Real at the Hanson Quarry Road are excellent. It is just over a mile from the bottom of the proposed quarry site directly to an intersection with the Hanson Quarry Road and dirt roads already cover some of this distance. Unfortunately, Hanson, the competition, controls the land parcel immediately to the west of the Oster property and the road right-of-way. The prospect of moving the proposed quarry's products across the Salinas River either, by bridge or conveyor and then out via the Hanson Quarry Road should be thoroughly examined to make this a viable proposal for the successful long term operation of a quarry on this site. I believe it would be in the County's and the Santa Margarita Ranch's best interest to push this option if they wish to see this proposal go forward.