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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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VIA EMAIL: wstarks@cityofrsm.org

Ms. Wendy Starks, AICP, Principal Planner
City of Rancho Santa Margarita, Planning Division
22112 El Paseo
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Re: Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update – Draft EIR

Dear Ms. Starks:

The California Geological Survey (CGS) has reviewed the Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update. CGS provides objective economic-geologic expertise to assist in the protection and development of mineral resources through the land-use planning process. This effort is mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA). The primary products are mineral land classification maps and reports. Local agencies are required to use the classification information when developing land-use plans and making land-use decisions.

The project applicant has deemed impacts to mineral resources as "less than significant."

Evaluation

When determining if a proposed project is within a Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ), CGS refers to its published mineral land classification reports. Lands classified as MRZ-2 indicate a high likelihood that significant mineral deposits (construction aggregate) are present. Areas within a MRZ-2 that have land use(s) considered to be compatible with mining are identified as Sectors. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is included in Special Report 143, Part III, and Open-File Report 94-15, prepared by CGS in 1981 and 1995, respectively.

In addition to the reports prepared by CGS, the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) can designate Sectors it deems as land containing mineral deposits of statewide or regional significance through their Designation Reports. Rancho Santa Margarita is included in the Designation Report No. 3 prepared by the SMGB in 1984.

Section 9 of the EIR states "MRZ-2 areas in the City lie within the general area of O'Neill Park along the Arroyo Trabuco Creek", however it does not mention that the MRZ-2 continues along Trabuco Creek through the Sphere of Influence (SOI), both north and south of Rancho Santa Margarita. Within the lands classified MRZ-2, Sector U and Sector V have been designated by the SMGB (see attached figure). Designated Sector U is

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located along Trabuco Creek extending south from the Tijeras Creek Golf Club passing through and out of the SOI. Designated Sector V runs along Trabuco Creek from the intersection of Trabuco Creek Road and Trabuco Canyon Road. This Sector continues along the northwestern boundary of the northeastern SOI area, which is described by Rancho Santa Margarita as a planned future community (a land-use incompatible with mining).

The referenced Mineral Land Classification reports are available at:

ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/pubs/sr/SR_143/PartIII/

ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dmg/pubs/ofr/OFR_94-15/

The SMGB Designation Report and figures are available at:

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/smgb/reports/Pages/Designation-Reports.aspx>

CGS Comment

CGS recommends that the EIR be revised to accurately reflect the location of all lands classified MRZ-2 within the SOI, and describe the potential impacts, or lack thereof, upon mineral resources.

Section 9 of the EIR states:

Additionally, O'Neill Park and the larger Arroyo Trabuco Creek are not utilized as a mineral resource recovery site.

Although this statement is accurate regarding current recovery operations, it should be revised to reflect the potential for future operations.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comments on the Draft EIR. If you have any questions, please contact me at 916-322-2719.

Sincerely,



Fred Gius, CEG
Supervising Engineering Geologist
Mineral Resources Program

Cc: State Clearinghouse

