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DEC 19 2019

December 19, 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

06-TUL-190-20.20
 PMR 19-001
 SUBSEQUENT EIR
 DEER CREEK ROCK MINE EXPANSION (2)
 SCH # 2019049052
 REF: PMR 14-002

SENT VIA EMAIL

Mr. Hector Guerra, Chief Environmental Planner
 Tulare County Resource Management Agency
 5961 S. Mooney Blvd.
 Visalia, CA 93277

Dear Mr. Guerra:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Deer Creek Mine Expansion proposal (Project). As indicated in the EIR - on March 11, 2015, the Tulare County Planning Commission certified the initial Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and adopted the CEQA Findings of Fact and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program under State Clearinghouse (SCH) No. 2014081023 for the Deer Creek Rock Project (Surface Mining and Reclamation Plan PMR 14-002).

The current Project (PMR 19-001) proposes to increase the footprint of the exiting 110-acre site by 20-acres. The Project proposes to increase the existing annual production by 500,000 tons *per year* for a maximum of 1,500,000 tons per year. The Project will increase rock production from 40,000,000 tons of rock to 75,000,000 tons of rock material during the estimated *50-year life* of the mining operation. The Project expansion will increase truck hauling by 224 trips *per day* to a maximum of 600 trips per day. The Project would result in an increase from 42,300 trips *per year* to a maximum of 60,000 trips per year (an increase of 17,700 trips per year). The Project will require approximately three (3) additional employees, resulting in a workforce of approximately 30 employees (20 in first shift and 10 in second shift).

The 110-acre site is located southeast of Porterville, approximately 1/3 mile east of the Avenue 120 (aka: Deer Creek Drive) and Road 272 intersection, approximately 5 miles east of the State Route (SR) 65/Avenue 124 intersection and 3 miles south of the SR 190/Road 284 intersection.

Caltrans provides the *following comments* consistent with the State's smart mobility goals that support a vibrant economy and sustainable communities:

1. A Traffic Impact Study (TIS) prepared for the Project is included as Appendix "G" of the Subsequent Environmental Impact Report.
2. The TIS (page 47) recommends for the "*Cumulative Year 2040 Plus Project Traffic Conditions*", that the following improvements would be required at the SR 65 and Avenue 128 intersection to address future transportation and circulation issues in the study area:

- “Widen the westbound approach to 1 left turn lane, 1 through lane, and 1 right turn lane with overlap phasing (adding 1 right turn)”.
3. The TIS (page 49) concludes that the Project will be required to contribute a fair-share towards the costs of improvements indicated for the SR 65 and Avenue 128 intersection based on the following formula used to calculate the equitable share responsibility:
 - Equitable Share = (Project Trips) / (Future Year Plus Approved Project Traffic - Existing Traffic)
 4. The Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (Chapter 9) of the SEIR has included *Mitigation Measure 4.9-1 as follows*:
 - Equitable Fair-Share Responsibility – “The proposed Project will be required to contribute a fair-share towards the costs of improvements that are identified for the Cumulative Year 2040 scenarios.”
 - The formula used to calculate the equitable share responsibility to the study area is as follows: Equitable Share = (Project Trips) / (Future Year Plus Approved Project Traffic - Existing Traffic)”.
 5. Caltrans concurs that *Mitigation Measure 4.9-1* should be required for the Project as indicated by the Subsequent EIR.
 6. Page 4.9-6 of the SEIR, second paragraph states, “State Route 65 currently exists as a four-lane divided roadway with posted speed limits of 55 mph...” Please note that this segment of SR 65 transitions from a 2-lane to a 4-lane facility. For example, south of Avenue 128 (Teapot Dome Ave.), SR 65 is a 2-lane undivided roadway with posted speed limits of 55 mph, and north of Avenue 128, SR 65 is a 4-lane divided expressway with posted speed of 65 mph. This statement is also referenced on page 10 of the TIS.
 7. Page 4.9-21 of the SEIR, “Queuing Analysis”, the last sentence at the bottom of the page states, “Queuing analysis was completed using Section 400 of Caltrans HDM.” It appears that the queue lengths listed in Table 4.9-8 (as well as in the Appendix G) are from the results of the Synchro outputs, not calculated from the Caltrans’s HDM method. Please note that the methodology from Caltrans HDM results in a much longer lane-length because it includes both storage and deceleration lengths. Please verify and correct. This comment also refers to the TIS, page 15, under “2.4.2 Queuing Analysis”, and page 29 under 3.9.2 Queuing Analysis”.
 8. Figure 4.9-12 of the SEIR, truck turning template at the intersection of SR 65 and Avenue 128 needs to be updated and verified. Intersection improvements have been completed at this location. Caltrans recommends updating the figure map and verify the truck turning template is adequate for the SR 65 southbound (SB) left turn movement to eastbound (EB) Avenue 128. Please verify.
 9. Figure 4.9-13 of the SEIR, truck turning template at the intersection of SR 65 and Avenue 128 needs to be updated and verified. Intersection improvements have been completed at this location. Caltrans recommends updating the figure map and verify the truck turning template is adequate for the Avenue 128 westbound (WB) right turn to SR 65 northbound (NB) and left turn to SR 65 southbound (SB). Please verify.
 10. Page 9: Table 1-4 “Peak One-Way Volumes” in the TIS (Appendix G) in Appendix G does

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not have a unit measure for the table values. For example: are the values equal to “passenger car per hour” or “vehicles per hour”. Please verify and correct. Please be advised that Caltrans does not use this method to perform level of service (LOS) for a facility.

11. Appendix C of the TIS report - SYNCHRO 10 (HCM 6th Edition) Worksheets: The Synchro outputs/printouts did not include any queue length (50th and 95th percentile queues) as well as the “turn type” (permitted, protected, etc.) for the signalized intersection at SR 65 at Avenue 128. Since the left turn demand for the SB lane in year 2040 with project condition scenario is greater than 300 vehicles per hour, in addition to the percentage of high truck volumes, Caltrans would like to review the 95th percentile queue for this movement. Please provide for review.

If you have any other questions, please call me at (559) 488-7396.

Sincerely,



DAVID DEEL
Associate Transportation Planner
Transportation Planning – North