

Dutra speaks out about its revised plan

Aimi Dutra, Petaluma Argus-Courier, 10-8-10

Dutra is community affairs director for Dutra Materials.

The Dutra name has been a part of Sonoma County for more than 20 years, providing a local source of aggregate and asphalt throughout the North Bay. On Tuesday, before the Board of Supervisors, we will present our plan for a new and environmentally superior asphalt facility in southern Sonoma County.

Over the last year, since our last hearing before the board, we have listened carefully to comments and suggestions provided by the community, and our new proposal is significantly different from our original application.

To start with, we eliminated the construction of a new barge off-loading facility, so that navigation on the Petaluma River will not be affected.

We dramatically reduced noise and visual impacts by removing the on-site crushing of recycled material, reduced the height of the silos by 14 feet and reduced peak production by 25 percent.

With the removal of the barge off-loading operation, Haystack Landing will now purchase aggregate from the existing Landing Way facility at the property immediately to the north and will transport the material from Landing Way to Haystack Landing either by truck or by electric conveyor.

As a mother to three young children, I understand concerns related to health. As a family-owned company, we believe we have a social responsibility to go to extraordinary lengths to thoroughly analyze both the short- and long-term impacts of this project.

In doing so, the experts have determined that air emissions are well below all regulatory thresholds designed to protect public health. If approved, the facility will also be subject to Bay Area Air Quality Management District permits and inspections, as well as random inspections by the county to ensure compliance.

Importantly, the Haystack Landing plant will be a state-of-the-art facility, providing clean and efficient operations while reducing environmental impacts. The proposed plant's asphalt production will be fully enclosed to reduce noise and emissions. Moreover, air from contained areas will be filtered before being released to the atmosphere.

Astec, the world's leading manufacturer of asphalt plants, has stated that the proposed Dutra plant includes more components for protection of human health than any plant it has designed, anywhere in the world.

Because health is such an important issue, it's fundamentally important to emphasize that this project will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by shortening diesel truck routes. If a south county source of aggregate and asphalt is not made available, continuing to import these resources from more remote locations will dramatically increase emissions.

The proposed Haystack Landing Asphalt Plant Project relocates Dutra's asphalt facility to a 37-acre industrial site one-half mile away from the original plant on Petaluma Boulevard South, on the east side of Highway 101. The location is situated in an area that has been zoned commercial/industrial for decades. It will border an

existing aggregate facility operated by Shamrock Materials and an existing recycling facility operated by Novato Disposal to the north.

We are also excited by the prospect that of the 37 acres at the site, more than 50 percent (19 acres) will be permanently preserved and devoted to open space and wetlands/brackish marsh habitat.

Finally, a portion of the property will be used for a new fire station for the San Antonio Volunteer Fire Department. The firefighters are in need of a new home, and this location will also provide for immediate freeway access.

We are committed to providing southern Sonoma County and the region with a much-needed asphalt resource. We have listened carefully to the community and believe our project will make a significant positive contribution to southern Sonoma County.