

# State asks district for more details on Romero Canyon

*Local officials pleased by response from Sacramento regarding planned Castaic high school site*

**Tammy Marashlian, Santa Clarita Signal, 2-28-11**

A state agency has asked the Hart district for more geotechnical information for the site picked for Castaic high school.

But overall, the state's first response about plans for Castaic high school are positive, officials say.

"The site is suitable for the school," Romero Canyon property owner Larry Rasmussen said.

The William S. Hart Union High School District submitted its geotechnical reports on Romero Canyon in December. Earlier this month, the California Geological Survey responded, saying that 29 of the 34 items analyzed have been adequately addressed, according to a copy of the letter provided to The Signal from the Department of Conservation.

However, the state is requesting more information on five items relating to slope stability and landslides. The additional information concerns Romero Canyon's deep slopes and canyons.

The requested information could mean additional investigations at Romero Canyon, said Thomas Cole, the district's Chief Operations Officer.

"It can be very easily resolved," he said.

Rasmussen said it should take six to eight weeks to address the state's concerns.

Overall, the letter is extremely positive, as 85 percent of the requirements have been met.

"Everything is fine," he said. "Everything is moving along. Everything is where we're supposed to be."

The Hart district has spent the last decade trying to build a high school to serve the Castaic community.

Without a high school of their own, high school students living in Castaic have attended West Ranch and Valencia high schools.

West Ranch and Valencia are among the biggest high schools within the Hart district and have faced challenges with student overcrowding.

Local voters in 2008 passed Measure SA, a \$300 million construction bond to pay for the construction of a Castaic high school.

The Hart district board chose Romero Canyon as its preferred site for the school last year.

School officials hope to open the school to ninth-graders only in 2014.

The reviews from the California Geological Survey are just one part of the process when a school district builds a school.

“It is not uncommon for CGS to request some additional information or clarification from a consultant,” said Don Drysdale of the department’s Public Affairs Office.

Cole said it usually takes two to three rounds of discussions with the state before the process is completed.