

Final Liberty Quarry environmental study released

Jeff Horseman, Riverside Press-Enterprise, 3-25-11

The final version of a massive environmental study of the proposed Liberty Quarry makes no major changes to a draft of the report slammed by quarry critics.

Riverside County officials Thursday released the final environmental impact report on the quarry sought for a 414-acre site in Temecula's foothills.

The county Planning Commission will review the project during public hearings on April 26 and May 3 in Temecula.

The Temecula City Council has joined opponents of the quarry, who fear the project will ruin the environment. Quarry developer Granite Construction maintains the quarry will provide an economic boost.

Vetted by county planners, the report of more than 6,000 pages was put together by a private consultant paid by Granite. The draft was released in 2009 and county officials have spent the past two years responding to hundreds of public comments on the document.

The draft study concluded the quarry would have "significant and unavoidable" effects on air quality and traffic -- but so would not building the project.

In a resolution, Temecula's council blasted that report as misleading and pro-quarry propaganda.

The final report concludes that the public comments "did not require additional evaluation or changes to the conclusions reached" in the draft.

"All the information added to the final (report) clarifies, amplifies, or makes insignificant modifications in the draft (report)."