

Final environmental report on quarry released

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The Riverside County Planning Department has released the final environmental impact report on Granite Construction's Liberty Quarry project.

The release of the 8,500-page document ---- stacked from the floor it would measure about 4 feet high ---- was not required until 10 days before the county Planning Commission's April 26 hearing on the project.

The company is seeking permission to run an open-pit mine on land near Temecula's southern boundary and the San Diego County community of Rainbow.

The proposal has been a flashpoint for controversy in Southwest County for the last few years.

The county released the final report Thursday, however, to give people interested in the project time to pore over all the information inside: studies on subjects such as the quarry's potential effects on air quality, traffic on Interstate 15, water quality and noise.

Due to the controversy about the quarry, which could produce about 5 million tons of aggregate material a year at peak production, the county is anticipating that the hearing will not conclude until May 3.

Both hearings are set for Rancho Community Church in Temecula, a location chosen due to its proximity to the proposed quarry and the seating capacity afforded by the venue.

The city of Temecula and opponents of the project argued for a recirculation of the draft version of the report because, they said, the information collected by the county was incomplete and misleading.

The county, however, rejected those calls for recirculating the report, which would have delayed consideration of the project by the commission and the county Board of Supervisors.

Granite cheered that decision in a statement released Thursday.

The upcoming hearings are scheduled to start at 4 p.m. at the church, 31300 Rancho Community Way.

The report is available for viewing at: www.tlma.co.riverside.ca.us/planning/content/temp/liberty_quarry.html.