

California predicts construction rock shortage

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A new report by the California Geological Survey finds that there is too little mined rock to meet the state's demand for construction over the next 50 years.

The Fresno area is one of four projected to have 10 years or less of rock reserves at local quarries.

But the report's conclusions were made before the county permitted the Carmelita mine near Reedley late last year. That mine is expected to bide the county at least another couple of decades, state officials said.

The mined rock -- primarily sand, gravel and crushed stone -- is a base material for both private projects, such as homes, as well as public roads and bridges.

Northern Tulare County is projected to have enough rock reserves for 11 to 20 years while southern Tulare County and eastern Merced County are projected to have enough for 21 to 30 years.

The demand is calculated regionally because shipping the materials is often cost-prohibitive.

The report identifies about 4 billion tons of permitted rock reserves statewide, which is about a third of the 50-year aggregate demand.

"Hopefully, planners will take this to heart and think about this as they make their land-use decisions," said report author John Clinkenbeard. "If they're going to have growth and they're going to continue to maintain their infrastructure, they need to plan for this just like they do plan for other things."