

PREPARING COMMENTS ON THE

# SARGENT RANCH QUARRY EIR

# OVERVIEW

What is CEQA? What is an EIR?

The EIR is the primary means of achieving the Legislature's considered declaration that it is the policy of this state to "take all action necessary to protect, rehabilitate, and enhance the environmental quality of the state." An EIR is an "environmental 'alarm bell' whose purpose it is to alert the public and its responsible officials to environmental changes before they have reached ecological points of no return." The EIR is also intended "to demonstrate to an apprehensive citizenry that the agency has, in fact, analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action." Because the EIR must be certified or rejected by public officials, it is a document of accountability. If CEQA is scrupulously followed, the public will know the basis on which its responsible officials either approve or reject environmentally significant action, and the public, being duly informed, can respond accordingly to action with which it disagrees. The EIR process protects not only the environment but also informed self-government.

# PROCESS

- Applicant submits application for project
- County prepares draft EIR
  - **Public comments on draft EIR**
- County responds to comments in final EIR
  - if public provides significant new information, then recirculated draft EIR + second comments + final EIR
- County decision makers consider final EIR as part of discretionary action
  - Planning Commission will consider:
    - Use Permit + Reclamation Plan
    - Whether to "certify" the final EIR
    - Whether to make statement of overriding considerations
  - All can be appealed to Board





# TYPES OF COMMENTS



## To persuade decisionmakers

Can be personal or persuasive

Best to identify yourself as a County voter

Can be as simple as explaining why you connect with the campaign

## To identify legal deficiencies

Intent is to help "exhaust" administrative remedies - i.e., tell the County what is wrong with the project or EIR **before** they make a decision



# DRAFT EIR

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# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Are there internal inconsistencies?
- Are assumptions explained and supported?
- For impacts identified as less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation, are the conclusions supported by evidence? Will the mitigation measures work as intended?
- For impacts identified as significant and unavoidable, are the impacts fully described? Are there mitigation measures that might be available?
- Has the County failed to consider a potential impact?
- Has the County considered all relevant evidence? If you are aware of helpful reports, plans, studies, or other documents, send the documents to the County as part of your comments.
- Is the County's data incomplete, outdated, or not site-specific?
- Are there likely to be indirect or cumulative impacts that have not been considered?
- Has the County correctly compared the alternatives? Is there another, better alternative?
- There is no need to self-censor.