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Project: Horse Canyon Conditional Use Permit (CU-11 -00004)

The site requesting a conditional use permit (CUP) for a gravel pit on Bettas Road is inappropriate for this area. The negative impact all along Bettas Road with its blasting, dust, noise, and constant commercial traffic is not suitable for this residential area.

RCW 36.70A.060 (b) states:

“Counties and cities shall require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within five hundred feet of, lands designated as agricultural lands, forest lands, or mineral resource lands, contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forest lands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration. The notice for mineral resource lands shall also inform that an application might be made for mining-related activities, including mining, extraction, washing, crushing, stockpiling, blasting, transporting, and recycling of minerals.”

Horse Canyon Estates of which I am a part has a contiguous border with the land proposed for the gravel pit. No such notice was indicated on any plot maps for HCE when we built on our property in 2005.

Apparently many things are allowed under conditional use; however, it seems logical that they comply with and fit in with the surrounding area to be considered for approval. A gravel pit certainly does not fit in with this residential area. As well, the area is prime habitat for mule deer and elk that frequent this area. There is a stream in the area of the proposed site. A gravel pit with its runoff and potential contamination of ground water would adversely affect the area.

From research supplied by others, it seems that Ellensburg Cement’s SEPA checklist contains several omissions and inaccuracies. ECP makes no mention of rock crushing on the Bettas Road site in their SEPA Environmental Checklist but they do state “Loading Processed Products” will occur. How can that be: where are the “processed products going to be processed (crushed)?

Further, there seems to be SEPA Checklist Omissions and Discrepancies in the following sections:

Environmental Elements Section 2 Air c. There is nothing in the SEPA checklist of any substance addressing dust control from the quarry. ECP states “Dust control by water truck for activities on site when needed and when site is active.” There is nothing addressing air quality impacts from dust or emissions that will become trapped in the valley. When the site is inactive how will the dust be controlled?

Environmental Elements Section 3 Water a 1. The SEPA checklist addresses seasonal streams. ECP mentions a spring fed pond that the adjacent owner has rights to. There is a seasonal stream within 100’ of the site. The ditch that follows Bettas Road runs along the western boundary of the proposed site and feeds into the stream through two culverts. ECP made no mention of this stream on the SEPA checklist, a stream that flows into Swauk creek and eventually into the Yakima River. None of the maps ECP submitted track the streams flow.

Environmental Elements Section 3 Water c and d. ECP says “Type 1 Storm water will be diverted from site.” Where will it be diverted and what impact will the quarry have on ground water? Domestic wells may be affected.

Environmental Elements Section 5 Animals a. ECP did not check mammals even though this is a prime habitat for mule deer. A large elk herd also frequents the area.

Environmental Health Section 7 a. ECP states there is no exposure to the risk of fire. This is an area of high fire danger.

Environmental Health Section 7 b 2. What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project? ECP gives no answer to that question other than “Truck and heavy equipment, backup alarms while ‘loading processed products’” There is no mention of the noise from blasting and probable rock crushing.

Environmental Health Section 7 b 3. The proposed measures to reduce noise are “Strategically placed stockpiles to reflect noise” which will not protect from blasting and probable rock crushing, trucks, and heavy equipment. We can already hear the noise from the gravel operation on Bettas Pass along with the windmills: this pit is right in our backyard—noise will abound.

Land and Shoreline Use Section 8 a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? ECP states “Vacant land, one home across from site” --a gross understatement. Take a look: there are ten homes with two more being built in the neighborhood in close proximity to the proposed site.

Land and Shoreline Use Section 8 k 1. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans. ECP states” It is compatible with adjacent mineral land that has an existing quarry site. Premium site for product” The mentioned quarry is not in use and has not been for many years. This is a residential neighborhood!

Transportation Section 14 d. ECP states no improvements will be necessary to Bettas Road.

Bettas Rd is a county maintained chip sealed road. Bettas Road was completely destroyed in the first two week of the road being used by commercial trucks during wind farm construction. With constant and continuous use by gravel hauling it won't be able to withstand the commercial traffic pressure.

Transportation Section 14 g. There is no analysis or study regarding traffic safety and the impact of increased truck traffic on Bettas Road other than this on the SEPA checklist ECP states "Truck traffic signs will be posted at either side of entrance." The entrance is located on a blind corner. Bettas Road is barely wide enough to accommodate two cars encountering each other: it is definitely not wide enough or designed for heavy commercial traffic.

Nothing in the SEPA checklist addresses the impacts from blasting and probable rock crushing and its impact on surrounding property from blasting, probable rock crushing, and noise levels? These activities will affect all the homes in Horse Canyon along the entire route of Bettas Road. ECP's SEPA report seems to be incomplete as it does not address these issues.

Under the A-20 zoning 17.29.020 uses permitted #15, this type of activity is allowed: home occupations that do not involve outdoor work or activities, which do not produce noise. A "noise-producing" gravel pit does not seem to be compatible with the zoning requirement. And, mining in this area would conflict with the current land use and should be reviewed to mitigate conflicting uses like residential neighborhoods.

The Bettas Road area is a residential area and this CUP should not be granted as would have significant adverse impacts on the entire neighborhood. This location is not an appropriate place for a gravel pit: it would violate or circumventing permitted land uses and is not compatible with public health or safety. For the reasons stated above, we ask you to disapprove this site for gravel pit operations of any kind.

Sincerely,



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