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To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the proposed Gibson Rezone (RZ-24-00001) from Ag-20 to Forest and Range.

First, the Project Narrative states that the subject property isn't suitable for agricultural uses. While this property obviously couldn't be used for irrigated farming, it can be used to graze animals. We and neighboring property owners can and do use the exact same type of land for seasonal grazing of animals. The subject property has historically been used for grazing, as well. In researching the attributes of Ag-20 and Forest and Range, it is quickly apparent that one of the only differences between the two zones is that mining and rock crushing are permitted uses in Forest and Range but not in Ag-20. Taken together with the current conditional use of rock mining and subsequent processing, it is obvious that this—not any agricultural deficiency—is the reason for the rezone request.

Although both zones are considered Rural Working Land, mining and crushing, especially on a commercial scale, are not inherently compatible with other uses and should be reviewed by Kittitas County. We would submit that mining and crushing operations should never be an allowed use in any zone; they should all be, at minimum, conditional uses and go through the related hearings and processes. At the very least, crushing is not compatible with the surrounding Ag-20 zone in this specific case.

This rezone could negatively impact public health. Noise, dust, and increased truck traffic could affect the quality of life and health of people and livestock nearby.

The proposal does not have merit or value for Kittitas County or this neighborhood. Mining and rock crushing would not be “appropriate for the natural conditions” and would, in fact, be “pursuing significant alteration that would have a greater likelihood of disrupting or impacting the natural environment and surrounding properties, and therefore impacting the rural lifestyle the Comprehensive Plan strives to protect” (Project Narrative, 11C detail).

The rezone is not appropriate. Circumstances haven't changed, there isn't a need for more Forest and Range zoning, and rock crushing is not a reasonable development of the subject property. In

fact, if allowed, this re-zone could cause more property throughout the county to change to Forest and Range zoning to allow for more mining and rock crushing. There are even neighboring property owners that could easily be interested in doing the same thing.

The rezone absolutely could be detrimental to the properties in the area, especially if not properly mitigated. Of course, people living in the area would be affected, but so would livestock and wildlife. In fact, one of our main concerns is the effect of a rock crushing operation on our sheep, cattle, horses, and other animals. When the rock crusher was run before, we could hear it in our house and see the dust at night in the lights over the pit. We are also concerned that there will be less oversight if mining is an allowed use, and that techniques like blasting will be used regularly. The noise and vibrations from such activities can have an adverse effect on people and animals (Erbe, C. *et al.* (2022). The Effects of Noise on Animals. In: Erbe, C., Thomas, J.A. (eds) Exploring Animal Behavior Through Sound: Volume 1. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97540-1_13). These operations can produce a lot of dust. Of course, this could potentially be mitigated through watering, but if water isn't available for agricultural use, it wouldn't be available for the mining/crushing operation. In addition, it could potentially affect the stability of the steep slope that many neighbors share with the subject property and cause property values to decrease. Also, Parke Creek Road in this area is very narrow and winding, and trucks have a tendency to speed around blind corners in the middle of the road and/or use their compression brakes. It may be difficult to provide a safe access point for trucks exiting the subject property, especially with an increase in traffic, due to the curves in and slope of the road. Increased truck traffic also deteriorates the road more quickly. If the rezone is granted, mitigation would need to be provided for the above items, including, but not limited to:

Location as far away from homes and livestock as possible

Limited hours of operation

Dust control

Reparation for reduced property values

Slope stabilization

Road safety and traffic mitigation

If this rezone is allowed, it sets a disturbing precedent for other land within Kittitas County. Not only does it set a precedent for spot zoning, it also would set a precedent for any landowner with inarable land to merely apply for a rezone to Forest and Range in order to set up operations such as mining and rock crushing without going through the otherwise required review process and public input.

Sincerely,

Jon and Julie Blackmore