

Bradley Gasawski

From: Debbie Bogart <dabogart@outlook.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2026 10:57 AM
To: Bradley Gasawski; CDS User
Cc: Terrence Danysh; Jamie Carmody; Charlie Beckett
Subject: SEPA Checklist and Application SE-26-00001 – Easton Travel Center (Majestic Group LLC) – Strong Opposition and Request for Denial
Attachments: SE-24-00020 Majestic Group - Comments - 6-27-24 WDFW.pdf; Public Comment on SEPA Environmental Checklist - Bogart 43026.pdf

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

SE-26-00001: Easton Travel Center

Kittitas County Community Development Services

Applicant: Majestic Group LLC (AJ Sandhu)

Tax Parcel No. 778834 — Adjacent to Exit 70, I-90, Easton, WA

April 30, 2026

To: Kittitas County Community Development Services

411 N Ruby St., Suite 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926
Email: CDS@Co.kittitas.wa.us

Re: SEPA Comments – Proposed #SE-26-00001 Easton Travel Center

I am writing to submit formal public comments on the SEPA Environmental Checklist filed for the Easton Travel Center (SE-26-00001), submitted by Majestic Group LLC on February 9, 2026, and received by the County on February 18, 2026. After careful review of the checklist, my responses are aligned with environmental concerns regarding Air Quality, Transportation Safety and Endangered Species. As a result of my comments and research, I am requesting that a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed.

1. Air Quality and Emissions

The presence of trucks queuing to enter the proposed development or obstructing Sparks Road, the Exit 70 overpass, and associated ramps negatively affect local air quality. During closures of I-90 due to weather, construction, or accidents, both noise levels and air pollution are likely to rise

significantly, resulting in increased ozone, carbon monoxide, and unpleasant odors. These conditions could adversely impact homeowners and businesses located nearby.

Data completed by the Clean Air Task Force (CAFT) demonstrate that cancer risk from diesel soot in Washington State is significant, especially between Seattle and Kittitas County, along the I-90 corridor. Washington ranks 30 out of 49 states for deaths, heart attacks, acute bronchitis, upper respiratory symptoms, lower respiratory symptoms, emergency room visits for asthma, cases of asthma exacerbation, and lifetime cancer risks. Historical data between 2023 and 2026 shows an increase in the areas documented.

While trucks idling on Exits 70 and 71 off and on ramps is already an issue, based on current levels of trucks parking at on and off ramps on both overpasses, it can be predicted that this problem will only increase.

HDS Truck Driving Institute reviews the pros and cons of travel centers for trucks and sites that are often expensive, crowded, and in high traffic areas, making them hard to access. In the proposed area for the travel center off Exit 71, these issues are not only predictable, but they are also currently occurring.

2. Transportation and Public Safety Impacts:

Congestion at Exit 70 is significantly heightened when I-90 is closed or stalled due to accidents, construction, or closures on Snoqualmie Pass. The presence of numerous trucks idling and awaiting reopened travel not only raises concerns regarding emissions but also affects overall safety and traffic flow. These circumstances particularly impact Sparks Road directly off of Exit 70 that parallels the proposed travel center, the mile between Exit 70 and Exit 71, where both passenger vehicles and semi-trucks attempt to bypass issues on I-90 by traveling through Easton via Railroad Street impacting travel and speed in front of the Easton Public School.

Easton residents have met three times with WSDOT, WSP, the Kittitas County Sheriff, and Kittitas Community Services to address traffic flow concerns near Easton Public School and I-90. No solution has been reached. To date, there has been little coordination among these agencies to address the communities' concerns.

Traffic congestion on I-90 and at Exits 70 and 71 are also hindering emergency response efforts. When these areas are congested, there is little to no shoulder space for emergency vehicles to get through. This affects the Easton Fire Department, Washington State Patrol, Kittitas County Sheriff's Department, local towing services, and regular traffic.

In 2024, Easton Public School partnered with Washington State University to conduct an Easton School District Environmental Research Project. The overall goal of which was to have a better understanding of the *environmental* and health impacts that I-90 has on *Easton* students. The range of noise exposure was 67.2 – 84/8 decibels. Findings cited that the level of noise from traffic along the I-90 corridor, along Easton, could impact level of learning and hearing among early learners.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Communication Disorders, noise levels above 85 decibels (dBA) are considered harmful to adults over time, causing permanent hearing damage or tinnitus. Studies are being conducted by several research facilities to assess chronic noise exposure and the risk of dementia. The Hearing and Health Foundation states that sounds above 70 dB can damage hearing over time.

The range of noise exposure along the I-90 corridors is not only impacting our children but also creating an impacting on the quality of life for all residents.

Providing a travel center for the trucking industry does not address noise, air quality, congestion, and traffic flow; it will only increase the negative impact on these issues as trucks park, leave their vehicles idling alongside the freeway and not using a travel center that will be expensive, congested and hard to enter due to old narrow overpass and roads built in the 1970's. This will increase an already witnessed and left unmanaged issue of biohazard waste, garbage, truck tires, and more being left near or on the off/on ramps of Exit 70 and 71.

3. Removal of Trees, Vegetation and Impact of Endangered and At-Risk Species

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Priority Habitats and Species maps identify this parcel and surrounding lands as supporting multiple at-risk species.

- Little Brown Bat populations are at risk due to destruction of roosting sites (including large trees and mines) and the effects of pesticide use. Development of the proposed Truck Stop / Travel Center would further degrade available habitat and contribute to population decline. Due to loss of roosting habitat and the spread of disease, Little Brown Bat populations have declined by over 90 percent in the northeastern United States.
- Yuma Myotis, a species that forages primarily over water and depends on abundant insect populations, would be further imperiled by loss of foraging and roosting habitat. Development of the proposed Truck Stop / Travel Center would result in additional habitat fragmentation and degradation, posing further risk to this species.
- Northern Spotted Owl remains listed as a threatened species and is currently being considered for endangered status under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Although no spotted owls have been documented in the immediate Easton area in recent years, invasive barred owls have been identified as a major threat by outcompeting spotted owls for habitat and food. Combined with habitat loss from high-severity wildfires and historic timber harvesting, population numbers have been significantly reduced. The proposed increase in timber removal associated with this project would further diminish the potential for suitable habitat for this species.

All at-risk and endangered species are highly vulnerable to the removal of large trees, which serve as roosting sites and are often located within critical foraging ranges.

In previous SEPA responses for this parcel, WDFW has stated that the project site is located within an Elk Winter Conservation Area and recommended that vegetation clearing be limited. WDFW has also advised that habitat impacts be minimized through revegetation with native plant species. Additionally, WDFW has expressed concern that the combination of extensive vegetation removal and increased impervious surfaces in a high-snowfall area necessitates a detailed drainage plan. Such a plan is needed to demonstrate that stormwater runoff will be properly managed and will not contribute to degradation of nearby fish-bearing waters, including Lake Easton and Silver Creek. WDFW has requested the opportunity to review and comment on the drainage plan once completed, it is unclear if this request was ever considered or even completed.

Given the anticipated impacts to wildlife and vegetation, a critical areas study should be conducted to properly identify affected species and habitats. In a letter dated June 27, 2024, from Jennifer Nelson, Fish and Wildlife Botanist for WDFW, addressed to Brad Gasawski in response to the Majestic Group SEPA application, WDFW stated that a complete review of impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitats had not been conducted and offered to assist with this assessment.

In review of this section of the SEPA and the applicants' responses, there is no indication that they completed a critical areas study. In the letter dated June 27, 2024, WDFW clearly requested that a critical areas study be done to ensure that proper identification and protection of habitat was completed. In this communication, WDFW also stated that clearing nearly the entire lot may negatively impact elk and other wildlife present on or near the site, which requires mitigation as specified per KCC 17A.01.100. They expressed that any future developments are also likely to have impacts to elk winter

Conclusion and Requested Actions

Based on the deficiencies identified above, we respectfully request that the County take the following actions:

1. Issue a Determination of Significance (DS) requiring preparation of a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The number and severity of unresolved environmental questions, particularly regarding stormwater contamination, groundwater protection, the LOSS system, flood risk, traffic, and wildlife, exceed what can be adequately addressed through a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS).
2. Conduct formal tribal consultation with all affected tribes identified in the checklist.
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Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We reserve the right to submit additional comments as further information becomes available.

Respectfully,



Debbie Bogart

Individually, and as a member of the Friends of Easton

Cc:

Terrence Danysh, PRK Law — tdanysh@prklaw.com

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Debbie Bogart

Individually, and as a member of the Friends of Easton

Cc:

Terrence Danysh, PRK Law – tdanysh@prklaw.com

Charlie Beckett, PRK Law – cbeckett@prklaw.com

Jamie Carmody, MFT Law – carmody@mftlaw.com



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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720
Telephone: (509) 575-2740 • Fax: (509) 575-2474

June 27, 2024

Bradley Gasawski
Community Development Services
Kittitas County
411 N. Ruby Street, Suite 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

SUBJECT: WDFW COMMENTS ON SE-24-00020 MAJESTIC GROUP SEPA

Dear Mr. Gasawski,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Majestic Group LLC's proposed project on parcel 778834, near Lake Easton and Interstate 90's Exit 70. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is familiar with the project area and we've reviewed the application materials available on file. The SEPA checklist and Notice of Application mention the need for a Forest Practice Application (FPA) as well as grading and fill associated with an access road, but there are no site plans or specific information available to evaluate the project for environmental impacts.

Based on information in the SEPA checklist, it appears there may be plans to subdivide the property and/or further develop the lot, but the SEPA is not clear that this is part of an overall phased approach. WDFW is concerned that the entire proposal has not been presented such that we can provide a complete review of possible impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitats. Future actions associated with or dependent upon this access road should be included in this environmental review per [WAC 197-11-060 \(3\)\(b\)](#). Questions A.6. and A.7. within the SEPA checklist describe future plans while also stating there are no future plans. The checklist also leaves open the chance that this proposal may include a short plat process. With no site plans or specific information, it is nearly impossible to review the project for all environmental impacts as is intended in the State Environmental Policy Act.

WDFW offers the following recommendations so we can provide adequate review of this proposal:

- Provide an overall site plan for a complete project, including phased developments and actions.
- Provide the Drainage Report referenced in Question A.8. of the SEPA checklist. The application materials indicate that there are no developments on the property, and later state that an existing storm drain system (referenced in Question B.3.c.1) is sufficient to handle runoff. WDFW is concerned about potential impacts to Lake Easton and the fish life present if surface water runoff and/or groundwater interactions could impact the water quality as property is in a Type 1 Critical Aquifer Recharge Area.

- Complete a critical areas study to evaluate the property for all critical areas so they can be properly identified and protected or mitigated for per KCC 17A. WDFW's PHS online mapper clearly shows the project area is within designated Elk Winter Range, a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area. Clearing nearly the entire lot may negatively impact elk and other wildlife present on or near the site, which requires mitigation per KCC 17A.01.100. Any future developments are also likely to have impacts to elk winter range.
- The project site is near the easternmost I-90 Connectivity Emphasis Area (CEA) identified to enhance ecological connectivity as part of the WSDOT I-90 East Project. Understanding the proposed project as a whole will be important for evaluating how it may impact wildlife connectivity through this CEA and the ability for wildlife to migrate through the area.

The project, as presented in the materials available online for review, is not well defined enough to provide meaningful environmental review or site-specific recommendations to ensure no net loss of critical areas functions and values.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the County's commitment to protect critical areas. Please let me know if there are any questions about our comments; we look forward to working together on this project and would welcome the opportunity for a site visit. I can be reached by phone at (509) 961-6639 or email at Jennifer.nelson@dfw.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Nelson".

Jennifer Nelson
Fish and Wildlife Biologist