

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

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**RE: Public Comments Opposing SE-26-00001, Easton Travel Center SEPA Environmental Checklist**

I am writing to formally submit my opposition to the proposed truck stop in Easton. While there are many valid concerns regarding the environmental impact, water, sewer, traffic, infrastructure, and snow removal, I would like to specifically comment on the implications for public safety.

I am a retired first responder in Washington State with over 36 years of experience. Based on my background, I have significant concerns regarding the following:

**Emergency Response Times for Law Enforcement**

Because this is a rural area with Law Enforcement being provided by a Sheriff Department, response times can be very long. At a recent meeting a Sergeant with the Kittitas County Sheriff Department stated that staffing levels can be anywhere between seven Deputies to two Deputies. Currently he stated that they had five Deputies out on injuries and there were two Deputies covering the entire County. Speaking from

experience, if you get a significant event taking place such as a serious vehicle collision, a Domestic Disturbance, Bar Fight, or a major wildfire threatening homes, two Deputies will not be available for calls of less priority. It is common during the summer months that we have wildfires in the County. At a meeting approximately one year ago, the Washington State Patrol had attended and stated that it isn't uncommon to only have two Troopers covering the entire County. If you have a Trooper out on a DUI arrest it can take a while to process the offender. If the other Trooper is out on a collision, you can't rely on them to help out. With the amount of commercial traffic traveling through this County and the number of collisions involving commercial vehicles they can be tied up for extended periods of time. Truck stops are known to bring more crime such as drugs, sex trafficking, human trafficking. The City of Ellensburg recently experienced an attempted Luring / Kidnapping by a commercial truck driver. If you go to any established truck stop, you will see more of the minor violations such as the litter that is dumped in the parking lot and the human feces and containers of urine that is left in the parking lot.

### **Emergency Response Times for Medical and Fire**

Easton is served by a volunteer Fire Department that provides medical and fire response. Easton has a very good group of volunteers that serve the Fire Department. However, with the number of collisions they respond to with the I-90 corridor, medical calls, and the fires that we have during the summer months they are busy. I am also aware that some of the fire department volunteers live on the opposite side of the interstate from the fire department. The truck stop traffic will increase their response time to get to the fire department and pick up their emergency vehicles. Having a truck stop in Easton is only going to increase the call level and make it harder for them to respond to calls.

### **Emergency Response Times**

I-90 gets shut down on a regular basis because of collisions or fires during the summer months. I have personally sat on I-90 unable to move. I was on W/B I-90, and a semi crashed just West of the top of the Easton grade blocking all W/B traffic. Traffic was at a standstill. I could see my exit (Exit 70), but I couldn't get to it because of traffic being at a standstill. I sat on the interstate from 1:00 AM until 4:00 AM when the roadway was cleared and traffic started moving. Besides the traffic being at a standstill on the travel portion of the roadway, the shoulders were also blocked with stopped traffic. I could see the overpass at Exit 70 and there were commercial vehicles lined up across the overpass and on the off ramp. This collision occurred when there weren't any weather issues. I have also seen when there has been a significant amount of snow the overpass at Exit 70 becomes one lane because they can't plow the snow over the edge because of the interstate below. Emergency responders must navigate all of this when responding to calls. This just makes their response times much longer.

I also want to add there is snowmobile traffic during the winter months and UTV / ATV traffic on the road in front of the proposed truck stop the rest of the year. This type of traffic isn't going to mix well with a large volume of commercial traffic.

Given my experience in public safety, I believe these issues pose a serious risk to the well-being of our community. I urge you to take these factors into heavy consideration when reviewing the proposal. I also ask that you listen to the residents of Easton. I have not heard one person or read of anyone living in Easton that wants this truck stop. The only ones that want this truck stop are the developers. I also ask that the elected Officials who represent this area listen to the residents of Easton. You were elected to represent them, and they are telling you they do not want a truck stop in Easton. I am asking the county to issue a Determination of Significance (DS) requiring preparation of a full Environmental Impact statement (EIS) due to the number and severity of the unresolved environmental questions.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Jim Kissinger  
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*Individually and as members on behalf of Friends of Easton*

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