

Opposition to the Cottonwood Open Pit Sand Mine Proposal in Rancho San Diego, California

by Sharon Cox, Samm Hurst

WHEREAS, the Cottonwood Golf Club owner, Cottonwood Cajon Es, LLC, Greg Brown of New West Investment Group, Inc. applied for project permits for the Cottonwood Sand Mining Project from San Diego County Planning and Development Services on November 19, 2018 to operate a sand mine and processing plant for a minimum of 10 years in the Sweetwater River Valley, where if approved the project proposes to operate on 214 acres of the 280-acre property weekdays 7:00am to 3:30pm, with 176 roundtrips daily, the equivalent of 27 large trucks hourly on the residential road Willow Glen Drive, resulting in the extraction and processing of over 7 million tons of aggregate materials creating excessive fugitive dust, a known carcinogen;

WHEREAS, creating an open pit sand mine in the middle of a residential community is likely to cause significant health risks to residents, hazards such as Silicosis, Pulmonary Fibrosis, Cancer, Asthma, and Valley Fever with additional increased risks to children at a proximate school, ***Jamacha Elementary & Extended Day Program*** that serves 504 students grades K - 5th, and to several other schools in the surrounding area, as well as a national wildlife refuge to federally endangered and/or threatened species that have been identified on this project site and within the vicinity of the project;

WHEREAS, the Sweetwater River running 55 miles from the Cleveland National Forest to Loveland Reservoir then Sweetwater Reservoir to the San Diego Bay, this natural water transfer system runs through the middle of the ***Cottonwood Golf Club***, the proposed site, thus increasing the likelihood of significant siltation and aggregate processing water contamination given that the open pit sand mine is located only 3 miles upstream from the Sweetwater Reservoir, which supplies drinking water for approximately 200,000 residences of Chula Vista and San Diego;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the San Diego County Democratic Party opposes the Cottonwood Open Pit Sand Mine Project, in Rancho San Diego, and supports the findings of the SANDAG 2011 Region Aggregate Supply Study that stipulates sand mines be located in an appropriate environment with minimal negative impact to people, wildlife, water, air and roads, as such the proposed location does not meet county standards;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be communicated to the current 2021 County Board of Supervisors for further review to not authorize this project.