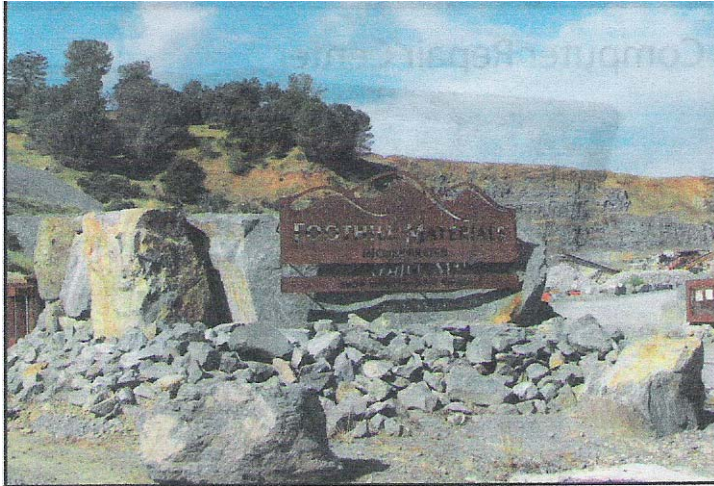


County's OK to expand services at quarry under fire

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Foothill Materials Inc. off Hogan Dam Road has administrative OK to add a "hot plant" at the location.

Expansion of the Hogan Quarry to include an asphalt concrete batch plant has drawn the ire of MyValleySprings.com and a Sacramento-based attorney.

Calaveras County Planning Director Peter Mauer on April 30 sent a letter to Nick Jones, Ford Construction Co., president, saying the "hot plant" is a permitted use at the Foothills Materials Inc. quarry located at 3650 Hogan Dam Road. Foothills Materials is a subsidiary of Ford Construction.

"MyValleySprings.com is concerned that this seems to be happening with no public notification or input, no traffic studies or environmental review, no protections from possible risks to the Calaveras River water quality and local CCWD water supply, no rules or regulations governing additional truck traffic, noise, or asphalt plant operations," said Colleen Platt, MyValleySprings.com secretary, in an email to The Valley Springs News.

Sacramento attorney Andrew Grundman sent a letter May 8 to Calaveras County Supervisor and Board Chairman Cliff Edson, outlining his concerns regarding administrative approval of the hot asphalt concrete plant.

He cites increased truck traffic, increased noise, increased toxicity, depleted ground water, degraded air quality and adverse impacts on tourism as outweighing the creation of any jobs attributable to the expansion.

“If the county intends to site/permit the aforementioned asphalt plant it should do so by following the rules it created, allow an opportunity for the public to provide input, and ensure that a thorough environmental review is conducted for a project of this scale,” Grundman concluded in his letter.

Maurer responded to Grundman’s concerns in a May 12 letter, outlining how he determined the expansion was a permitted use. He added his decision could be appealed.

MyValleySprings.com plans to file an appeal by today’s deadline, Platt said.

The appeal will be submitted to Fawn McLaughlin, chair of the Calaveras County Planning Commission, which must hear the matter within 45 days, Platt added.

It was Grundman who alerted MyValleySprings.com to the expansion plan, Platt said, and they are working together on the appeal process.

The quarry is within Supervisorial District 5. When called about the expansion plan, District 5 Supervisor Steve Kearney said since it looks as though the matter is becoming a legal issue he would have to defer all comment to county counsel.

Jones was also called to find out more about Ford Construction’s expansion plans. He was in a meeting and had not returned the call by presstime Thursday.

Ford Construction plans back in 2006 to substantially increase removal of rock from the quarry raised concerns from nearby residents and the request was eventually withdrawn.