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**STOP SYAR EXPANSION (SSE)**

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Napa County Planning, Building  
& Environmental Services

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**Attn:** Donald Barrella:

The following comments and observations pertain to the Syar Napa Quarry Expansion Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Background and Discussion, October 14, 2015:

**B. Air Quality and Health Risk:**

Syar Napa Quarry's (SNQ) mining operations release toxic, fugitive emissions that pose a significant, potential adverse environmental effect in the form of a health risk to a large, settled residential and business population, parks, and schools. This is a public health threat. The decision whether to and/or how to monitor, test, and study the pollution from the quarry must be made in an objective, open public forum with the participation of citizens, independent experts and governmental officials.

My documented observations, research and calculations prove SNQ has been in violation of air quality standards, continuously, for over 30 years. It is time to scientifically quantify and qualify the extent of the quarry's air pollution and its effect on the human population being involuntarily exposed, and hold Syar Industries, Inc. accountable for its air quality violations. It is the responsible thing to do. There is no excuse for further inaction.

Please read the attached report by Lindsey Sears, October 19, 2015, *Air Quality Review and Comments, Syar Napa Quarry Expansion EIR*. In her report, she found the PM<sub>10</sub> particulate emissions from the quarry are, and will continue to be, in violation of both the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) and the California Ambient Air Quality Standard (CAAQS) if the project is approved as proposed. The public has the right to know what type of toxic emissions it is being exposed to and in what quantities.

“Major concerns for human health from exposure to PM-10 include: effects on breathing and respiratory systems, damage to lung tissue, cancer, and premature death. The elderly, children, and people with chronic lung disease, influenza, or asthma, are especially sensitive to the effects of particulate matter.”

The technology and management practices exist to stop this pollution. It is past time to make it stop. Deferring action is unacceptable. It is time to enforce air quality standards.

#### **G. Permit Terms:**

Time Limit – Many quarries in the Bay Area in the vicinity of settled residential populations have 20 year term limits or less. For instance, Sonoma County issues 20 year mining permits. Mining equipment and management practices must be required to stay up-to-date on a yearly basis. SNQ has deferred equipment upgrades for years, causing unnecessary emissions and pollution. All Tier 0 and Tier 1 equipment must be replaced with Tier 3 and Tier 4 equipment before any new permit is granted. The Tier 2 equipment must be replaced within 5 years.

Annual Aggregate Need - Below are the Project Objectives as written in the Draft EIR Vol.1, August 2013.

### **5.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The following are the primary and supporting project objectives of #P08-00337-SMP.

#### **Primary Project Objectives:**

1. To continue and extend operation of the existing Syar Napa Quarry for 35 years, thereby by providing a local, reliable, affordable, and consistent source of aggregate and aggregate-related materials to customers in the Napa region;
2. To expand the surface mining and reclamation plan by approximately 124-acres to allow for mining access to reliable, affordable, and a consistent source of aggregate and aggregate-related materials to customers in the Napa region;
3. To increase the annual permitted saleable quantity of aggregate and aggregate related materials from currently one million tons to two million tons;

#### **Supporting Project Objectives:**

4. To increase production of high quality aggregate and aggregate products in conformance with state and local goals and objectives, including the Napa County General Plan (which designates the site as Mineral Resource (MR)) and the policies of the SMGB (which has designated the site as a resource of regional significance);
5. To extend the life of the existing quarry to meet long-term local needs for aggregate materials in the Napa region through continued and expanded operation of the existing facilities, including the rock processing plant, sand plant, two asphaltic concrete (AC) plants, and the aggregate base (AB)/recycling plant;

6. To extend the life of the existing quarry and in so doing aid implementation of state and local goals to reduce the loss of high quality productive agricultural land as well as minimize greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use by providing a local aggregate resource;
7. To help fulfill California's need to permit additional aggregate resources to meet current and expected demand for public and private infrastructure improvements;
8. To utilize Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement (RAP) handling equipment at the Syar Napa Quarry and in so doing aid implementation of state and local goals to facilitate local production and reuse of high quality aggregate products;
9. To improve and refine commitments for surface mine reclamation during and after active mining;
10. To relocate sections of the existing Skyline Wilderness Park trail currently located on the project site so that it is permanently accessible to the public by returning it to land within Skyline Wilderness Park;
11. To update the Reclamation Plan which will be more effective and use native species.

By their placement, the first two primary project objectives emphasize the importance of “providing a local, reliable, affordable and consistent source of aggregate and aggregate-related materials to customers in the Napa region. Note: The Napa region is within the boundaries of Napa County, not outside.

Obviously, to fulfill the first two primary project objectives, the quantity (tons) of aggregate and aggregate-related products needed in the Napa region must be known to establish the quarry's annual production. Below, using values given in Table 3-1 on Page 3-5 of the Draft EIR, I will calculate the maximum quantity (tons) of aggregate and aggregate-related products sold by SNQ to all sources, annually, for the project study years, 2004-2008.

Also, in the EIR, keeping the sale and delivery of the quarry products within the Napa Region is emphasized to reduce truck trip lengths, greenhouse gas emissions, and fuel use. Because aggregate and aggregate-related products are low cost and high volume, it is especially important to restrict shipping distances to keep the cost of construction and infrastructure projects down. (Department of Transportation, September 30, 2008)

Additionally, mining is an extractive industry. Mineral resources are removed and sold. In the context of an open-face surface mine, mineral resources are non-renewable; they are not analogous to renewable agricultural crops, such as grapevines or grapes. The foundational, inelastic need to extract a mineral resource, the quantity needed for construction and infrastructure projects, is directly associated with, and proportional to, the potential, adverse environmental effects related to that extraction and, therefore, becomes an integral part of the EIR process within the purview of CEQA oversight authority. As it pertains to the Syar EIR, the mineral resource needed, the quantity

needed, drives the entire EIR process and must be empirically (factually) known. Without this foundational need, there would be no potential, adverse environmental effect and no EIR.

And, because mineral resources are non-renewable, they must be managed wisely to fulfill the primary project objectives 1 and 2: To provide “a local, reliable, affordable, and consistent source of aggregate and aggregate-related materials to customers in the Napa region.” Linked to the quantity needed, the mineral reserves must, also, be empirically (factually) known as this information defines future extraction with its potential, adverse environmental effects.

In the Napa Valley, especially, it is essential to employ extraordinary mineral resource planning and management oversight. There are no other aggregate mines of any size in the Valley and I am not aware of any proposals or plans to permit other mining operations in the County. So, it is imperative to permit SNQ to produce for the local market, here in Napa Valley, with very limited sales outside the Napa region. Other surrounding counties must develop their own mineral resources and not rely on Napa to provide their aggregate needs. If SNQ ships product out of the Napa region to other counties, they will become dependent and deplete our mineral resources too quickly.

Primary objective 3, and supporting objectives 4,5, and 7 are problematic. If SNQ is allowed to increase its annual production to 1.3 million tons, it will over supply the local market. In fact, it is over-supplying the local market at its present production level. With any expansion, the quarry will be forced to sell and transport the excess product out of the Napa region and in so doing will contradict primary objectives leading to a circular argument, saying one thing and doing the opposite.

Any proposed argument for expansion becomes even more tenuous with the inclusion of supporting objective 8. With an increased capacity for processing recycled asphalt pavement (RAP), the need for mining virgin aggregate (VA) decreases. Then, adding in recycled concrete (RC) to produce recycled concrete aggregate (RCA) and the need to mine VA is reduced even further. The total tons of recycled materials cited in the Draft EIR are as follows: 60,000 tons of RAP, 65,000 tons of RC, and 93,874 tons of unspecified recycled material = a total of 218,874 tons of recycled material processed by SNQ annually. Recycled material processing is likely to increase in the future, so the need to mine VA will decrease proportionately. Therefore, if anything, the quarry has even less need to expand at this time. There is no objective or logical reason to expand.

Another thing. In reviewing the SNQ’s Mining Operation Annual Reports filed with the State of California, Department of Conservation, for the years 2004-2008 some interesting factual information was revealed. From 2004-6, SNQ claimed it was mining 209 acres of land. When the Notice of Publication (NOP) was published in 2009, the quarry had expanded the area being mined to 472 acres of land. So, in three years, the

mine increased 263 acres. By the time the Draft EIR was written in 2013, the area being mined increased another 25 acres to 497 acres. So, between 2006 - 2013 the area being mined increased from 209 acres to 497 acres, an increase in 288 acres, or a 138% increase in 7 years. Now, Syar representatives say of the 288 acres there is only enough economically viable mineral resource left to last 1 year. So, in 7 years 288 acres of mineral resource was exhausted. But, if allowed, the proposed 77 acre expansion is predicted to last 35 years. Factually, how many tons of mineral resources remain under the existing mining permit?

**The Maximum Quantity (Tons) of Aggregate and Aggregate-Related Products Sold To All Sources, Annually, For The Project Study Years 2004-2008**  
(Draft EIR Vol. I, August 2013, Page 3-5, Table 3-1: Source: Syar Inc.)

**TABLE 3-1: EXISTING AND PROPOSED ANNUAL QUARRY PRODUCTION**

	Existing <sup>2</sup>	Proposed
	(millions of tons)	
Total Processed <sup>1</sup>	0. 81	2. 00
Total Extracted <sup>3,4</sup>	0. 59	1. 65

Source: Syar Inc., 2012.

Notes:

1. Total processed saleable aggregate and aggregate-related materials include: (1) aggregate extracted from the quarry except overburden; (2) material barged from offsite that is used as a component in the production of other materials; (3) recycled material from offsite; (4) and onsite interplant transfers. Total also includes asphalt production.
2. Based on annual average from 2004 to 2008 (Source: Syar Inc.).
3. Total extracted from quarry equals total processed minus: (1) material barged from offsite that is used as a component in the production of other materials; (2) recycled material from offsite; (3) and onsite interplant transfers (Source: Syar Inc.).
4. Approximately 75 percent of total extracted material is saleable; remaining 25 percent is non-saleable overburden and waste rock (Source: Syar Inc.).

The total extracted saleable material =  $0.59 \times .75 = 0.375$  million tons = 375,000 tons.  
(See Notes: 4., above)

Based on SNQ total annual production of 810,000 tons, the total net salable amount is 375,000 tons. This is the maximum quantity (tons) of aggregate and aggregate-related products sold to all sources, annually, for the project study years 2004-2008, according to the information provided by Syar Industries, Inc. And, of course, SNQ sells only a portion of this total in Napa County. The exact total product needed from SNQ in Napa Valley remains unknown.

As it stands, the net salable tons of product 375,000 divided by the population of Napa County at the time of the study, approximately 138,000 people, = 2.71 tons/capita in Napa County. Once SNQ produces the truck weigh tickets and mineral reserves, the empirical (factual) data, our governmental officials with public participation will be able to responsibly and objectively make decisions regarding quarry permitting and the management of Napa Valley's mineral resources.

Sincerely,  
Steven Booth  
Stop Syar Expansion