

4 December, 2018

Honorable Eileen Quiring

Clark County Councilor

Vancouver, WA

Councilor Quiring,

This letter is to express my opposition to expansion of the Yacolt Mountain Surface Mining proposal. I spoke at the most recent council meeting voicing my concern about the massive amount of truck traffic that is currently traveling our regional roads and the expectation that expanding the mining footprint will generate even more trucks.

A conditional use permit issued by Clark County was the basis by which rock mining by the operator was allowed at Yacolt Mountain. However, by admission of the council at the 27 November, 2018 hearing, "the county's oversight has been lax." What monitoring has been done to verify the operator is complying with the use permit currently? How many trucks are allowed to enter and exit the pit daily and what has the county done to verify that maximum number of truck travels to and from the pit is not being exceeded currently?

As I stated at the hearing 27 November, rock trucks both loaded and unloaded are a potentially very dangerous hazard as they travel the secondary roads of rural Clark County. While the vast number of truck drivers may operate their vehicles in a safe defensive manner, I have personally witnessed gravel truck drivers that exceed speed limits and cut corners at intersections. The Yacolt Mountain pit also markets rock to other contractors who are not governed by the operators rules. Then, of course, there are the individuals in the public who drive the roads and have marginal driving skills: younger drivers who have little driving experience or older senior citizens whose driving skills are not what they once were. Any collision with a 76,000 pound truck/trailer would be tragic for everyone involved.

It would seem foolhardy to move forward with an approval for expansion of the Yacolt Mountain Mining proposal when the county has done so little in the compliance verification of the current conditional use permit at Yacolt Mountain. At each of the hearings with public input to date, about 90% of the input received from the public has been negative about the Yacolt Quarry pit operation. Is that because they are operating outside the purview of their current conditional use permit? How can, in good conscience, there be a move forward granting expansion of the operation if there is not a good sense about the current operating practices at Yacolt Mountain?

The county needs to set up a structure for monitoring rock mining conditional use permit compliance. That includes who has responsibility for verification, how often checks are made, and what the consequences are for non-compliance.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. My wife and I live about a half mile from the Yacolt Mountain quarry.

Sincerely,

Dale and Judee Branch