

From: [Frost, Erik@DOC](mailto:Frost.Erik@DOC)
To: jmerlan@RIVCO.ORG
Cc: [LCI State Clearinghouse](#); OLRA@DOC
Subject: Highland Grove IV Project - CGS comments (SCH No. 2024050835)
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Hello,

The CGS has received and reviewed the Draft Environment Impact Report (DEIR) for the Highland Grove IV Project. Our comments are included below. Please let me know if you have any questions.

The DEIR's assessment of mineral resources for the Highland Grove IV Project considered California Division of Mines and Geology (CDMG) Special Report (SR) 143, CGS Special Report 231, and relevant information from the Riverside County General Plan. The DEIR correctly identifies the project site as being classified MRZ 3, defined as an area containing mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Based on mapping cited from CGS sources, the DEIR concludes that "the Project site does not contain any areas of known mineral resources."

However, CDMG SR 165 provides a more detailed classification than SR 143 or SR 231 for the area of the proposed project. According to SR 165, the project area is classified as MRZ 3a CS (c 2), which includes correlations to mining operations within similar geologic units near Corona.

Granitic rocks of the southern California batholith—present at the project site—have historically been used for base aggregate material. Some areas of these granitic units, now classified as MRZ 2a, have been tested and found suitable for asphaltic and Portland cement concrete aggregate. SR 165 also notes that additional testing and evaluation would be required to determine the aggregate suitability of rocks at the project site.

Plate 4A of SR 165 characterizes MRZ 3a areas as "containing known mineral occurrences of undetermined mineral resource significance. Further exploration work within these areas could result in reclassification of specific localities into MRZ-2a or MRZ-2b categories." Plate 1A of SR 165 also maps several historical borrow pits and riprap sources used during the construction of Lake Mathews Dam. These sites occur within the same geologic unit underlying the project site.

Additionally, SR 143 describes the MRZ 3 deposits in Temescal Valley, including the location of the proposed project, as "plutonic and volcanic rocks ... that are potential sources of crushed rock."

Given these references, the DEIR's conclusion that the site does not contain areas of known mineral resources is inconsistent with the definitions and classifications presented in SR 165. Nearby historical aggregate mining operations hosted in similar lithologies, nearby historical sources of borrow material and rip rap, and the classification of the site as MRZ 3a indicate that the project area may contain mineral deposits of potential significance. Additional site-specific exploration could confirm whether economically valuable mineral resources exist within the project boundaries.

Dr. Erik K. Frost

Senior Engineering Geologist | Seismic Hazards Program

California Geological Survey

715 P Street, MS 1901, Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 205-8255

erik.frost@conservation.ca.gov