

Guidelines for Writing Public Comments to the Army Corps of Engineers

Objective 1 *You want to give a sense of who you are and why this issue affects you.*

For governmental entities, this might be mostly a question of economics or resource allocation (for instance, Corona de Tucson Fire Department is concerned that increased traffic and accidents on Highway 83 will put them in a situation wherein their moral obligations to respond to incidents is in direct opposition to their financial ability to do so).

For mission-oriented organizations, there is usually a clear correspondence between the proposed activities and the mission of the organization. For instance, the Center for Biological Diversity is by definition bound to oppose actions that wantonly destroy habitat or endanger biodiversity.

For individual families and residents the issues tend to be more personal and related to quality of life, belief systems, or a human being's need to drink water (!) Think long and hard about *why* this issue is close to your heart, and draft out a few bullet points before continuing. If you have children, include their comments.

Objective 2 *Clearly enumerate the reasons that, in your opinion, the proposed project is not in the public interest.*

Take a look at the Army Corps of Engineers public notice document – it is a very complete and concise look at what CalPortland intends to do [download by clicking here]. What part of their plans do you feel is *not in the public interest*? Do you object to 23-ton haul trucks sharing rural roads with school buses? Do you feel that blasting and digging millions of tons of rock is a danger to your family and quality of life? It is your neighborhood – do you welcome dust, noise, and probable decreased property values? And what about water? There are perennial springs right next to the proposed pits...what will happen to those springs when CalPortland goes down one hundred feet? Be concise and complete, and put each item as a bullet point or a numbered item.

Objective 3 *List the questions that you need answered in order to fully understand the impact that the proposed project would have on you.*

By this point in your writing, you will have developed tons of questions that disturb you. List each of these and number them, and be clear that you would like your questions answered completely. Don't ask questions that have a quick, numerical answer (these are rarely interesting!). Ask open-ended questions such as "Immediately downstream of the proposed project site, Davidson Canyon is a designated *Outstanding Water of Arizona*. How would the proposed project make sure that the Outstanding Water quality and quantity are not affected in any way?"

Objective 4 *Point Out the "Cumulative Impact"*

If it were just this project, possibly the community could rely on mitigation and trust the company's poorly developed reclamation plan. However, look around

you: Rosemont to the south, W.R.Henderson's presence in the West, TEP's plans to run high-voltage wires over your head... put all of this together, and what you get is an environmental and lifestyle meltdown, where the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. This is called "cumulative impact", and you should mention it. List all of the shady projects that surround you.

Objective 5 Request a Public Hearing on This Issue

This issue has been a matter of public opposition for five years. Thousands of signatures have been placed on petitions. It is a big deal, and residents deserve a public hearing where they can question the decision-makers face to face.

The Empire-Fagan Coalition has a team of expeditors that can help you, should you find it difficult to submit your public comments. We offer all kinds of help, including:

- proofreading your letter for you
- printing your letter out for those who do not have a printer
- even mailing it for you if you don't have a stamp

Please call upon us...we will help you help our community!

When your masterpiece of civic engagement is finished, please mail it (the old fashioned way) to the Army Corps of Engineers:

Marjorie Blaine
Senior Project Manager/Biologist
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Tucson Project Office, Regulatory Division
5205 E. Comanche Street
Tucson, AZ 85707

Also, please mail *or email* a copy to us: Empire-Fagan Coalition, Box 812, Vail 85641
info@empirefagan.org

THE LAST DAY THAT YOU CAN SAFELY POST A LETTER IS SEPTEMBER 2nd. THE COMMENT PERIOD ENDS SEPTEMBER 5th.

Thank you so much for taking the time to save Davidson Canyon.
Good Luck and Good Writing! ß