

rrika A. Garcia

**From:** Glenda Fletcher <gsfletch33@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2014 9:42 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Mining La Bajada Mesa

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi,

I am writing to comment on the proposal to mine La Bajada Mesa. This proposal is ludicrous and unnecessary. Please consider these counter-arguments:

--Mining in this site would result in the degradation of a NM cultural landscape that has been historically, culturally and environmentally significant to New Mexico for hundreds of years.

--Mining the Mesa would ruin the geological integrity--the grandeur of this oceanic Gateway along I-25 into Santa Fe & Waldo Canyon Road--the road that leads into the Galisteo basin park lands, a sustainable and growing economic resource. The Mesa needs to be preserved as open space for the welfare of the county, city, state, and thus the nation.

--There is no need for another basalt gravel mine in the County or another gravel mining operation off of I-25 as there are several existing gravel mines within reasonable proximity that can provide these materials.

The current owners have no protected rights to demand a



rezoning as they purchased the property with the current agricultural/residential zoning in place. The County has no obligation to enhance the economic (sold by the cubic yard) value of the property to the detriment of the County and State as a whole.

Please take these points into consideration, and turn down this proposal.

Respectfully,

Glenda Fletcher  
PO Box 467  
Velarde, NM 87582

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Alexis Pilialoaeku'upu'uwai Higginbotham <mustangally1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 02, 2014 4:37 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

I am the Vice President of The San Marcos Association, a community organization in southern Santa Fe County that has been around for over 28 years. As a representative of this organization, I want to say that *we are adamantly opposed to this mining application on La Bajada Mesa.*

This beloved New Mexican site has historical, cultural and environmental significance. It is the gateway to northern New Mexico, a breathtaking vista that would be irreparably destroyed if mining took place there. It deserves to be preserved as open space land. There are many gravel mines already within reasonable access. Why do we need another one?

The owners don't have a right to demand rezoning for their property. They knew when they bought it that it was zoned for residential/agricultural. You would set a terrible precedent if you rezoned this property and not for hundreds of other people around town who might also wish to change the zoning of their properties.

It is a *terrible* idea. Please know that the San Marcos Association is completely against it.

Sincerely,  
Alexis Higginbotham  
VP of The San Marcos Association

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Miriam Misenko <miriamboldman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 6:14 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC"

I would like to express my feelings about the possibility of strip mining on La Bajada mesa. This would be an absolute travesty and allowing this to happen would create an ugly scar across our beautiful landscape that would remain visible for centuries. Our land and water are a precious commodity in this state and should not be abused. We all know that if you drive your car across the desert soil, just one time, those tire tracks remain for months. Now imagine the enormity of this mine, those tracks/marks/scars will be there forever! They can never be undone--EVER! All for a few years of greed.

My husband and I moved here specifically because of this magical landscape. We are artist/painters and La Bajada is a frequent subject in these paintings. Many of these paintings go home with tourists who have come to New Mexico and want to take a piece of this beautiful place home with them. I doubt with an ugly gash across the landscape this would be the case.

This strip mine will also lower our property values which directly affects the revenue received in real estate taxes.

Please do not let this happen!

Sincerely,  
Miriam and Dan Boldman  
464 Camino Cerro Chato  
Madrid, NM 87010  
(505) 470-7831

Diane Senior  
317-B Camino Cerro Chato  
Madrid, NM 87010  
January 27, 2014

Jose Larrañaga  
Case Manager  
Santa Fe County  
P.O. Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I am writing to you as a Santa Fe County resident and voter, opposed to the Buena Vista Estates / Rockology application to strip mine La Bajada Mesa.

The proposed mine location is poorly sited and would be a visible blight for miles around. This picture of La Bajada Mesa was taken from a side road off of Route 14, one of many places where the top of the mesa is clearly visible. Allowing a strip mine to be sited in such a prominently visible location would show incredible disregard for the visual impacts of extractive industry operations on the surrounding area.



Contrast this location with the Caja Del Rio Quarry, which is already producing basalt material for the county. That quarry is well situated near the county landfill, minimizing additional visual impacts and providing a potentially symbiotic arrangement by creating a cavity that might later be filled with county refuse. Why would the county permit a new strip mine to mar La Bajada Mesa when other, more sensible options, already exist?

NBB-139

Santa Fe is a county that claims to value “sustainable growth.” This application is one of those telling moments where we learn if it we really mean those words. The proposed strip mining of La Bajada Mesa – the literal consumption of an historic natural and cultural icon – is as patently *unsustainable* an enterprise as one could envision. The degradation of this precious landmark would cause irreparable harm to the landscape, diminish the quality of life for thousands of New Mexicans, and detract from the breathtaking beauty that calls visitors around the world to marvel at this place. Quite simply, La Bajada Mesa is a significant historic and natural landmark, prominently visible for miles, that deserves to be protected and preserved for the benefit of all residents, not strip mined into rubble to enrich a few individuals.

While it’s true that our county has a history of mining, modern land needs and demographics have changed. Much of Santa Fe County’s population and tax base now consists of transplants, like myself, who have chosen this area for its natural beauty, dark skies and quiet places. Tourists contribute heavily to our economy, marveling at the arid beauty of our lands and the majesty of La Bajada Mesa as they explore the county. These things matter more in the long term – culturally, economically, and even morally – than the short term profits of a few individuals.

Quite frankly, the proposed mining operation would destroy the very characteristics that make this a place worth living. My own home is eight miles from the proposed mine site, yet there are times of day when it appears close enough to touch. On windless days, I can just hear I-25, even further in the distance. In the evenings, the Cerrillos Hills block the lights of Santa Fe and I enjoy a night sky filled with some of the faintest stars visible to the human eye. Yet the proposed strip mine promises me 25 years of industrial blasting, grinding, truck traffic, dust pollution and night-time lighting, as the landscape I cherish is pulverized to line the pockets of those who would simply use it up. Where is the sustainability in that?

In addition to the scarification of the land, the proposed strip mine operations would diminish the quality of our night skies and the quiet of our rural areas. The application specifies pole mounted lighting up to 20 feet in height but then claims that “observance of light from outside the property will be limited.” Those two statements are inherently incompatible and truly meaningless given the unobstructed views of the Mesa top for more than fifteen miles around. The application also cites the additional use of portable lights during “times that operations would occur during peak construction period.” Peak construction time generally coincides with warmer weather – the very same time of year when we who live here open our homes to outdoors to enjoy this remarkable place we live. Instead, the applicants would have us endure the clamor of mining operations, even in the still of the night.

The issue of dust and airborne debris also needs to be examined with a critical eye. In an area where shifting winds in excess of 25 mph and gusts double that speed are common, should we have confidence in the applicants’ assertion that “finished stockpile material will be located in an area that is protected as much as possible from the prevailing winds”? Where, exactly, would such a protected place be found on an exposed mesa top? And are the hundreds of thousands of gallons of potable water the applicants propose to truck in every year for dust control even

adequate for the task? Perhaps even more importantly, is that how our precious, ever-diminishing desert water resources are best used?

Can we even trust that the information in the application is true and accurate? In a letter to the Development Review Manager during Rockology's 2008 mine application process, James Siebert claimed that the "mineral extraction for construction materials is requested to supply ballast for the Railrunner..." This claim was refuted in a March 27, 2008 Albuquerque Journal article entitled, "DOT Denies Mine-Train Link." Now let's look at the current application. It describes the Project Location as "east of Interstate 25 and south of Waldo Canyon Road." Yet the Vicinity Map that follows shows the Site as *south* of Interstate 25 and *west* of Waldo Canyon Road. The subsequent Google Map provided on p.6 of the application places the "proposed quarry" in yet *another* spot. So where is it? After carefully reading the application, I certainly cannot say. Whether deception or simple sloppiness, is this outfit to be trusted to successfully manage an operation of such significance?

Reasonable, sustainable use of La Bajada Mesa is reflected in its current agricultural/residential zoning, not in the destruction of this stunning escarpment for gravel. Because people generally do not choose to live in or near environmentally degraded places, rezoning even parts of the Mesa for extractive industry would make it undesirable for any other purpose and essentially doom it to a future of mining exploitation. This special place deserves better.

Other property owners in the county deserve better as well. Although it is difficult to accurately quantify the potential impact of this operation on property values, it logically follows that anything that diminishes the environment and quality of life also diminishes property values. Many areas that would be visually and aurally impacted by the proposed strip mine are unserved by common public amenities such as water, sewer, electric, phone and even basic road maintenance. The only value our land holds is its rural character, its views, its skies and its quietude. The proposed mine would rob our lands of even that, with heavy equipment shattering the desert silence, dust obscuring the crystalline air, and nighttime lighting diminishing even the darkness of night.

The county has no obligation to grant the applicants' rezoning request. But I firmly believe that each Committee member and Commissioner – as an agent of the residents of this county – has an obligation to protect our open spaces and water resources for the long term common good of the citizenry. I sincerely hope you believe this as well and will decide to deny the Buena Vista Estates/Rockology application.

Respectfully,

Diane Senior  
317-B Camino Cerro Chato  
Madrid, NM 87010

NBB-141

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 10:20 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** FW: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Daniel Mayfield  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 10:01 AM  
**To:** Stephen C. Ross; Penny Ellis-Green  
**Subject:** FW: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

FYI

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**From:** Ruth Fisher [rthfisher4@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 01, 2014 7:53 AM  
**To:** Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Robert A. Anaya; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics; Liz Stefanics; Robin Gurule  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

We live not far from where the proposed strip mining project is planned for the La Bajada mesa area and very much opposed to it.

- From what we've read, the resources aren't needed and can be procured from the other two mining areas in Santa Fe and this mine is not necessary.
- If water for the project is taken from our water table, we will be short on supply and especially with drought conditions looming, this is a real concern.
- If water is trucked in, the Frontage Road will have too much traffic:
  - o added expense of maintenance of the road will be needed
  - o noise, exhaust fumes, dust and traffic congestion will increase
  - o safety for children let off at the various bus stops on the Frontage Road will be compromised
- Noise from the mining operation will increase

We retired and moved here a few years ago for the peace and quiet, clean water and air, and less congested environment. This mining project will undoubtedly change all that and our friends who are also considering moving to Santa Fe for the same reasons, will probably change their minds.

Please stop this operation from occurring.

Ruth & Harry Fisher  
37 Taylor Loop  
Santa Fe, NM



**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 10:21 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** FW: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Attachments:** CDRC\_Rockology\_Larranga\_Senior.doc; CDRC\_Rockology\_Larranga\_Senior.pdf

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Daniel Mayfield  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 10:10 AM  
**To:** Stephen C. Ross; Penny Ellis-Green  
**Subject:** FW: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

FYI

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**From:** Senior,Diane [Diane.Senior@gartner.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 9:57 AM  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green; Robin Gurule; Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Robert A. Anaya; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics  
**Subject:** FW: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

**From:** Senior,Diane  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 7:46 AM  
**To:** 'joselarra@co.santa-fe.nm.us'  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

Attached are my thoughts on the Buena Vista Estates/Rockology application to strip mine La Bajada Mesa. Please share my letter with the appropriate CDRC and BCC members.

Thank you,

Diane Senior

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**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** ryan touns <findingrien@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 4:48 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC,

Dear Jose Larranaga-

I am a resident of La Cienega who supports the protection/preservation of La Bajada Mesa for its known historical and obvious environmental attributes. I do not support mining this location for many reasons:

-Mining this site would clearly degrade/ruin this spectacular and significant geological landscape and viewshed, diminishing the opportunity to protect The Gateway. I suspect you are aware of the longrunning efforts and large coalition of support to preserve it as open space for the welfare of the entire county and state?

-It is my understanding that there are already existing gravel mines nearby to provide these materials, and therefore no justifiable need to even debate this request currently.

-Given the changes we have been witnessing with the climate, and specifically regarding drought being a regular reality now here, we need to be acting from the wise perspective of long term sustainability.

-And, as an artist (photography, painting & pottery), I attest to the mesa's profound & inspirational grandeur! Once altered, forever altered...

I respectfully ask that this application to mine La Bajada Mesa, or any other following, be declined.

Thank you. Sincerely-

Ryan Touns  
36 Raven Ravine  
La Cienega, NM 87507

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Steve Kalminson <mayajone@cybermesa.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 6:25 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

To whom it may concern:

As a 40 year voting resident of Santa Fe County and one who enjoys a view of La Bajada from my residence in the Ortiz Mts., I wish to express my opposition to the proposed basalt mine in the La Bajada area.

This dramatic landscape should not be destroyed by a mining operation, including the detrimental effects of associated water use, dust and vehicular pollution.

I believe the area should remain zoned agriculture/residential and it's "gateway-to-Santa Fe-view" preserved.

Respectfully,  
Steve Kalminson

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Michele Chisholm <chisholmpottery@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 25, 2014 12:01 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Robert A. Anaya; Kathy S. Holian; istefanics@santafecountynm.gov  
**Subject:** "CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC"

Dear Sirs/Madams:

Please ***do not strip mine*** La Bajada Mesa for gravel. The Mesa is one of the most visible and scenic landmarks in our area. This pure, untouched, iconic and historic landscape is THE gateway to Santa Fe. There is no need to choose this location for mining since we already have the Waldo Mine and Caja del Rio Mines. And these mines already have access to water which does not need to be trucked in. The proposed water usage for this site is 100 million gallons per year for 25 years for dust control. This is a huge expense for the mining company who will probably not adhere to the environmental pollution control because of the enormous cost. Caja del Rio already has plans underway to mine for a landfill. If Buena Vista Estates, Inc. mines Caja del Rio, they will be helping the county to further meet the development of the future landfill. Now, doesn't that make much more sense?

If water needs to be hauled to this site from the prison facilities, the amount of truck traffic on our roads would create not only more possibilities for accidents, but would also eat up the asphalt on the roads to where the county would need to step in and fix them. The burden on our local fire departments and road departments would most definately increase.

La Bajada Mesa has been featured all over the world. As an artist who sells her work on the historic Santa Fe Plaza I see people from all over the world visiting our beautiful state. Please don't strip mine La Bajada Mesa.

Sincerely,  
Michele Chisholm  
50 Sendero de Toho  
Cerrillos, NM 87010  
(505) 350-4994  
[www.chisholmpottery.com](http://www.chisholmpottery.com)  
e-mail: [chisholmpottery@gmail.com](mailto:chisholmpottery@gmail.com)

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Liberty Blueskyes <libertyblueskyes@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 8:38 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Bajada Mesa

Dear Sir,

It won't be long before The Land of Enchantment will have to change its description to The Land of Industrial Development. We don't have much water in New Mexico and are experiencing a severe drought. This proposal of mining basalt, destroying the landscape and using our precious water resources is not palatable to the public. Stop now before you destroy everything that is enchanting about our state.

I highly disagree with mining in our state. We can do better at developing sustainable, non destructive industries that work with the earth instead of against her.

Liberty Blueskyes  
Resident of Santa Fe

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** emgraeser@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 8:29 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Casa Buena Vista Estates & Rockology LLC

In addition to desecration of La Bajada, this mining project, with 24/7 lighting and noise, will be devastating to property values in a wide area and will virtually destroy tourism in this area.  
It's unnecessary and a terrible plan!

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Senior,Diane <Diane.Senior@gartner.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 7:47 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Attachments:** CDRC\_Rockology\_Larranga\_Senior.doc; CDRC\_Rockology\_Larranga\_Senior.pdf

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

Attached are my thoughts on the Buena Vista Estates/Rockology application to strip mine La Bajada Mesa. Please share my letter with the appropriate CDRC and BCC members.

Thank you,

Diane Senior

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**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Ruth Fisher <rthfisher4@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2014 2:32 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

We live not far from where the proposed strip mining project is planned for the La Bajada mesa area and very much opposed to it.

- From what we've read, the resources aren't needed and can be procured from the other two mining areas in Santa Fe and this mine is not necessary.
- If water for the project is taken from our water table, we will be short on supply and especially with drought conditions looming, this is a real concern.
- If water is trucked in, the Frontage Road will have too much traffic:
  - added expense of maintenance of the road will be needed
  - noise, exhaust fumes, dust and traffic congestion will increase
  - safety for children let off at the various bus stops on the Frontage Road will be compromised
- Noise from the mining operation will increase

We retired and moved here a few years ago for the peace and quiet, clean water and air, and less congested environment. This mining project will undoubtedly change all that and our friends who are also considering moving to Santa Fe for the same reasons will probably change their minds.

**Please stop this operation from occurring.**

Ruth & Harry Fisher  
37 Taylor Loop  
Santa Fe, NM



**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Dr. Jim Campbell <drjim@rof.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 20, 2014 1:14 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

Please note my opposition to opening La Bajada Mesa to any kind of mining activity. La Bajada Mesa is the historic backdrop of our entire area. It has marked the cultural and environmental boundary between *rio arriba* and *rio abajo* for many generations, and shouldn't be altered for short-term economic gains. It's part of our shared historic and cultural heritage, not only joining past generations to the landscape, but future generations as well.

- One more gravel mine isn't needed. There are other gravel mines nearby, and they can provide plenty of material far into the future.
- La Bajada Mesa in its natural state is best conserved as open space. Nothing better introduces New Mexico's visitors to our state than approaching La Bajada. As a Santa Fé County resident who looks out on the mesa every day, I can assure you that the scenic view of La Bajada Mesa is one of the reasons I live where I do. Like generations before me, it tells me I'm home.

Please carefully consider what we'll lose if La Bajada Mesa is opened for mining, and reject the mining proposal.

Thank you.

James Campbell, PhD  
135 Dancing Horse  
Cerrillos, NM 87010  
505-699-2904

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Ross Lockridge <murlock@raintreecounty.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 16, 2014 6:37 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Attachments:** 2003-Most-Endangered-1.pdf

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

I wish to submit for Staff consideration the Most Endangered [Place] recognition that the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance specified for La Bajada Mesa and Escarpment in 2003. This occurred after plans for the strip-mining of the Mesa were first conceived and sketched in 2002.

The text of the attached reads as follows:

**La Bajada Mesa and Escarpment, Santa Fe**

**Significance:** La Bajada represents a key landscape demarcation between what the Spanish colonial world termed the Rio Abajo and Rio Arriba regions of New Mexico--the lower and upper lands with their distinct ecologies and climates. It also represented the greatest single obstacle for movement across the land as signified by the many pathways that early travelers used to climb or descend the escarpment. These various paths stretch for miles along the escarpment eastward beyond the Cerrillos Hills to the Galisteo Basin and westward to the Canon Santa Fe. The wagon and, later, automobile roads passing near the village of La Bajada recall historic (and prehistoric) north and south movement. Early engravings and, later, postcards celebrated the escarpment and the challenges it posed to transportation. Many of these early images convey a sense of the grandeur of undisturbed open spaces, altered only by the engineering feats of modest roadways scaling the escarpment.

**Threat:** Mining and development could disturb the view shed of the entire escarpment. Any disturbances of the land (including cell towers) will diminish the capacity to appreciate the significance of the space. Retaining an undisturbed as possible view shed is essential to retaining a feeling for this important landscape and what it has meant historically for defining New Mexico's southwestern character.

*--From: New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance, pp 4-5 of the attached (includes photos & text).*

<http://www.nmheritage.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/2003-Most-Endangered.pdf>

Submitted by:  
Ross Lockridge  
POB 22  
Cerrillos, NM 87010

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Ross Lockridge <murlock@raintreecounty.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 15, 2014 2:44 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Attachments:** Art XI Rock compliance.pdf

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

On January 7, I contacted the Caja Del Rio Quarry manager for Delhur, Joe Kirmer. He said that the quarry has 3 1/2 million cubic yards of basalt, and that it was a 10 year supply. They will custom crush to meet DOT standards and they provide to everyone private and governmental. They use piped non-potable water. They send trucks all over... Rio Rancho etc.

This demonstrates that supplies are plentiful and another basalt mine at La Bajada Mesa is not needed.

Attached are additional comments relating to Article XI, 1.2 Location Standards for Creation of New Mining Zones.

Sincerely,

Ann Murray  
POB 22  
Cerrillos, NM 87010

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Roger Taylor <clearskynm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 12:29 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

The Santa Fe Basin Water Association would like to go on record as strongly protesting this application.

We have serious concerns about the significant water use over the 25 year lease period that will have to be hauled to the mesa for this proposed operation. The lack of water on the mesa means it will have to be bulk-hauled in through a County supply contract, and given the drought issues this County is facing we believe this is a questionable use of water needed by County residents.

In addition it would seem that there is little need for additional gravel operations in the County, and one must question the use of extending water to an area in which it does not exist to support a questionable business enterprise.

Best Regards

Roger Taylor, President  
Santa Fe Basin Water Association  
505-466-3469  
[clearskynm@gmail.com](mailto:clearskynm@gmail.com)

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 12:47 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** FW: Letter of Record / re. Mining Application Buena Vista, LLC - Rockology / re. La Bajada Mesa

**From:** Delise9999 [<mailto:delise9999@aol.com>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 02, 2014 12:30 PM  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Subject:** Letter of Record / re. Mining Application Buena Vista, LLC - Rockology / re. La Bajada Mesa

Dear Penny:

There is a broad coalition of residents, institutions, organizations and businesses in Santa Fe County that support the preservation and protection of La Bajada Mesa and the escarpment for its renowned cultural, historical, and environmental attributes.

We do not support mining in this location for the following reasons:

- 1.) Mining in this site would result in the degradation of NM cultural landscape that has been historically, culturally and environmentally significant to New Mexico for hundred of years.
- 2.) Mining the Mesa would ruin the geological integrity — the grandeur of this oceanic Gateway along I-25 into Santa Fe & Waldo Canyon Road - the road into the Galisteo basin park lands, a sustainable and growing economic resource. The Mesa needs to be preserved as open space for the welfare of the county, city, state, and thus the nation.
- 3.) There is no need for another basalt gravel mine in the County or another gravel mining operation off of I-25 as there are several existing gravel mines within reasonable proximity that can provide these materials.
- 4.) The current owners have no protected rights to demand a rezoning as they purchased the property with the current agricultural/residential zoning in place. The County has no obligation to enhance the economic (sold by the cubic yard) value of the property to the detriment of the County and State as a whole.

We are respectfully requesting that the application to mine La Bajada Mesa by Buena Vista / Rockology LLC be declined. Thank you.

With regard,

Dianne Elise Strauss

*President, Portfolio Group  
Santa Fe, NM*

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Monday, February 03, 2014 12:52 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** FW: La Bajada Mesa mining application

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**From:** Ryan Toups [<mailto:findingrien@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 01, 2014 10:49 PM  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Subject:** La Bajada Mesa mining application

To whom it may concern-

I am a resident of La Cienega who supports the protection/preservation of La Bajada Mesa for its known historical and obvious environmental attributes. I do not support mining this location for many reasons:

-Mining this site would clearly degrade/ruin this spectacular and significant geological landscape and watershed, diminishing the opportunity to protect The Gateway. I suspect you are aware of the longrunning efforts and large coalition of support to preserve it as open space for the welfare of the entire county and state?

-It is my understanding that there are already existing gravel mines nearby to provide these materials, and therefore no justifiable need to even debate this request currently.

-Given the changes we have been witnessing with the climate, and specifically regarding drought being a regular reality now here, we need to be acting from the wise perspective of long term sustainability.

-And, as an artist (photography, painting & pottery), I attest to the mesa's profound & inspirational grandeur! Once altered, forever altered...

I respectfully ask that this application to mine La Bajada Mesa, or any other following, be declined.

Thank you. Sincerely-

Ryan Toups  
[36 Raven Ravine](#)  
[La Cienega, NM 87507](#)

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Manuel Lopez <mlopez32908@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 10:42 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** re:CDRC case buena vista estates & rockology limited llc

Mr. Larranaga,

I want you to know that I am very much against this project....we have scarce water resources as it is and tearing up our natural landscape would be disastrous to our environment as well as the cultural and historical significance.

Destroying our beautiful landscape and scarring our history and culture for a GRAVEL PIT is absolute nonsense.

Respectfully submitted,  
Manuel Lopez

Pamela Bennett-Cumming  
286 Camino Cerro Chato,  
Cerrillos NM 87010

January 31, 2014

Jose Larrañaga, Case Manager  
Building and Development Services  
Santa Fe County  
PO Box 276  
Santa Fe NM 87504

**Subject: CDRC Case: Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC**

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

I am writing to state my opposition to the Buena Vista Estates/Rockology proposal to convert a very rural and undisturbed area of Santa Fe County - to a hard rock strip mine, apparently using the County's own water right. As a County resident landowner and voter, I request that my government deeply consider the irreversible consequences of actions on this case.

**Property values:** I chose my land in rural Santa Fe County because of its beauty, quiet, and for the scenic vistas which surround it. The land was more expensive (and is more valuable) than for example – a home within sight and sound of a hard rock strip mine's noise and 24-hour lights, or next to an industrial area. Yet if the County rezones part of La Bajada Mesa for the benefit of this mining application, that is exactly what I will have to live with. And the value of my land and many others will plummet accordingly.

**Zoning change:** The La Bajada Mesa's sweeping expanse of open, natural landscape is a scenic gateway to the more developed Santa Fe area. Residents and the many tourists who visit – value this natural beauty. Current zoning provides for sparse development and rural uses. I understand that the **Land Development Code's Article XI Section 1.4** says that a proposal for a strip mine requires the creation of a Mining Zone. Although the applicants indicate that mining is a common use close by the proposal – I don't see any mines on La Bajada Mesa. I hope the County does not feel it is under obligation to alter the zoning simply because a private company from another area wishes to profit from it. I am concerned the rezone would open the door to industry, since **Special Uses (Section 1.1.1)** states "Industrial, manufacturing and related office uses not related to mining uses..." would be allowed. So at the stroke of a pen – pristine landscape vistas become a new industrial area with no relationship to surrounding land use, and no infrastructure.

**Water:** I hear the issue of mining water rights for the project is currently pending with the State Engineer's office. **Article XI Section 1.7** states "the application shall submit evidence that the applicant has obtained an adequate water supply as evidenced by appropriate permits issued by the state engineer's office." Instead of meeting the County's requirement, the proposal wants to use more than 2 acre feet per year of the County's *own* water right for the mining - using potable water from the Highway 14 County water station. The County utility department says it has no policy about this, but I would ask my government decision-makers to consider that likewise there doesn't appear to be a policy which directly permits such a precedent-setting water commitment to a single mining user for 25 years. In this time of drought, please consider the potential conflict of interest if the County's own potable water being supplied for a consumptive use<sup>1</sup>, in a project which may not meet its own regulations and requires a rezone to even be allowed.

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<sup>1</sup> Consumptive use: when water is removed from available supplies without return to a water resource system.

NB3-158



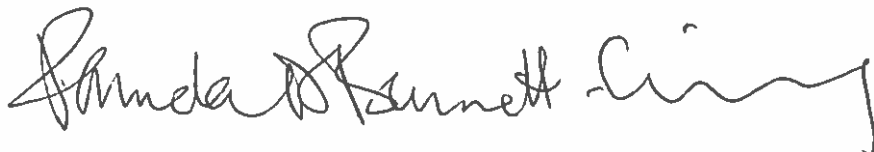
**Noise pollution:** The blasting, grinding, crushing, earth moving and heavy equipment noises will affect the quality of life for those of us in this very quiet rural community. Sound travels for so many miles that on occasion a heavy vehicle can be heard on I-25, more than 10 miles away. The mine would be closer and the daily noise constant. Regular explosions would be part of our lives!

**Dust pollution:** Surface mining equals dust. Since I live in an area where winds can regularly reach 25 mph, with gusts to 50 mph, acres of open mine and overburden would translate to an unlivable situation for all those downwind of the mine. Since winds can come from any direction around here, downwind will regularly include Santa Fe as well.

**Light pollution:** The current natural undeveloped nature of the La Bajada Mesa is evidenced by the fact that we see **no permanent lights out there** in our view of the mesa. This proposal would have industrial level lighting polluting the rural landscape. The mine proposes 24 hour lighting on 20ft poles "for security."

Finally, as the County's decision-makers evaluate the merits of this proposed strip mine, I ask that you thoughtfully weigh whether the individual profits of a single project merit irreversibly altering the landscape and quality of life for our community, and its many visitors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela D. Bennett-Cumming". The signature is fluid and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most prominent.

Pamela D Bennett-Cumming

NBB-159

January 31, 2014

Russell J. Bennett-Cumming  
286 Camino Cerro Chato  
Cerrillos, NM 87010

José Larrañaga, Case Mgr.  
Building and Development Services  
Santa Fe County  
PO Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

Concerning the proposed La Bajada Mesa gravel strip mine project, I would like to formally lodge my opposition.

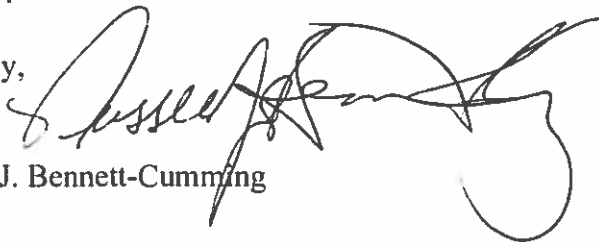
I am a property owner/resident in the county and have outstanding views of our marvelous landscape. Unfortunately, if a gravel strip mine mars my vista, my property value will plummet, hence my taxes will be reduced along with hundreds of other property owners who share this pristine view.

Additionally, we will have to endure:

1. noise pollution from blasting
2. light pollution from powerful lights that can be seen for many miles
3. increased dust pollution from heavy equipment, crushing and trucking...fortunately, due to prevailing winds, I will not be subject to as much of that as Santa Fe.
4. the affront of a non-land owner business that will affect so many people, which claims it will employ up to only seven (7) workers, provided it is able to compete with other established like operations in the area
5. allowing consumptive use of diminishing potable public water for industrial dust control by a venture that has no water right as per mining regulations, when the water was originally intended for residents along Highway 14 who have little or no water on their properties

The number of affected residents is large. The potential of a business that will be of value to our community is minimal. We must instead encourage businesses that will be an asset to our community, not a detriment. In addition, if the commissioners nod approval through a zoning change to this insensitive proposal, it will open the floodgates for other non-mining related industries to establish and aid in the desecration of our home. Our home is a very special, uniquely beautiful place; let's keep it that way.

Sincerely,



Russell J. Bennett-Cumming

NBB-160

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Douglas Conwell <earthwalks1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 2:37 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bajada Mining proposal

Dear Mr. Larranaga,

I have lived in Santa Fe for 34 years and love our land and community. One of the reasons we love living here is the beauty of the land. La Bajada mesa is a dramatic and beautiful example of that. It is not only a place of beauty but carries cultural and historical significance and is a gateway to the area from the south. To destroy this heritage for a huge gravel pit mine would be to deny generations to come the importance of this land. Please deny the application for the basalt mine.

Thank you,

Douglas Conwell

February 5, 2014

29 Rancho Alegre Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87508

Mr. Jose Larrañaga  
Case Manager, Santa Fe County  
PO Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Re: CDRC Case Buena Visa Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I am calling on Santa Fe's elected representatives and agencies to deny the permit of Buena Vista Estates/Rockology LLC to strip mine La Bajada Mesa.

The site is poorly chosen. It will cause a visual blight on an iconic and historical area and create wind-borne, light, and noise pollution in a pristine area of the county. Country roads, not built to accommodate high volume industrial traffic, will be impacted by trucks hauling water or gravel. In addition, the gravel that will be produced is not needed. Other existing mines in the county are able to meet existing and increased demand for this grade of gravel and are far better sited.

Most unconscionable in this time of increasing drought and diminishing water reserves, will be the use of an estimated one million gallons of water yearly from county wells for dust control for the estimated 25 year life of the mine. Indeed, controlling dust during the mining operation and for the exposed stockpiles of rock and dirt is problematic at best, given the endemic high winds of this area.

While Santa Fe County has a past history of mining, the area has become a cultural mecca, treasured by those born here as well as transplants, and attracting visitors from around the world for its beauty, art and history. This 'new' reality brings significant income to the county – far more than the few jobs and tax dollars the strip mine will produce – and will be threatened by the creation of a polluted blight.

This project threatens the quality of life of its citizens and falls far outside the type of sustainable growth that Santa Fe County claims to value. The CDRC and the County Commissioners need to vote to protect this legacy for its citizens and deny Rockology the opportunity to reduce part of La Bajada mesa to a pile of rubble.

Sincerely,

Barbara King

NBB-162

**Jose Larranaga**

---

**From:** Clan Gilman <clangilman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 7:48 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** We oppose La Bajada Strip Mine

**To:**  
Jose Larrañaga

We are residents of Santa Fe County and write to express our concern of the proposed La Bajada Strip Mine.

We do not approve this mine due to the impact it will make on our land and environment.

Please mark two citizens as AGAINST this proposed project.

Thank you,  
Henry & Alyson Gilman  
PO Box 261  
Cerrillos NM  
505-424-9308

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Hill Top Productions <bill@filmprojection.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 9:00 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bajada

Sir,

I have been informed that Santa Fe County staff is recommending approval to the recent application for mining La Bajada Mesa.

This is such a bad decision in so many ways, including the use of our limited water supplies and degradation of our environment.

La Bajada should be a National Monument, not a gravel pit. The aesthetic entrance to Santa Fe and Rio Arriba will be irreparably ruined.

The local people do not want this.

Please rethink your position as a representative of the people of Santa Fe County.

Thank you,

Bill Hill  
Hill Top Productions, LLC  
14 Pollito Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
Phone: 505-982-3191  
Fax: 505-438-4524  
[www.hilltopproductionsllc.com](http://www.hilltopproductionsllc.com)  
Like us on Facebook

**Jose Larranaga**

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**From:** patricia mckenna <patrat111@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 9:06 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga

Hello, I will be at the hearing and I strongly appose the mining permit. We are in a water shortage, the value of our land is important, the quality of our lives and air is crucial to us. Please get back to me with your reasoning for approving strip mining. I want to understand what it brings to the community you represent. Patricia McKenna, owner of Redbone in Madrid and a ranch in the Ortiz. 505 780 1380.... [patrat111@yahoo.com](mailto:patrat111@yahoo.com).... 192 Camino Cerro Chato Cerrillos NM 87010

## Jose Larranaga

---

**From:** Tish Wilson <tishwilson1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 10:36 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bajada Mesa

Dear Mr. Larranaga:

Please do NOT support the strip mining in La Bajada Mesa. In a state like NM (high drought state) the amount of water needed and the dust it will create is just not worth the destruction of a beautiful area. The mining is not essential and therefore should not be allowed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely  
Patricia "Tish" Wilson  
[tishwilson1@gmail.com](mailto:tishwilson1@gmail.com)  
505-660-7599



**Jose Larranaga**

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**From:** Bill Scruggs <bionicbilly45@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 11:09 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Sir:

As a resident of the Rancho San Marcos subdivision of Highway 14 south of I-25, I am **strongly opposed** to the proposed gravel mining at **La Bajada Mesa**. Such an operation would permanently damage the quality of life in our area and depreciate our property values. It appears it would also have a similar impact on most of the surrounding housing and recreation areas besides just Rancho San Marcos. Please do not permit this operation for the good of all of Santa Fe and the area to it's south which services so many residents.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns,

William M. Scruggs  
Resident and President, Rancho San Marcos Homeowners Association  
214 Calle Galisteo  
Santa Fe, NM 87508

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Karen Weese <karenweese@me.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 11:14 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Jose Larranaga,

I am writing to you as a physician and a concerned homeowner in the Rancho San Marcos subdivision in the Turquoise Trail area.

I do NOT support mining on La Bajada Mesa for several reasons:

- Increased water usage by the mine in an already water restricted area - we don't need to deplete our water reservoirs any faster
- We already have a tremendous amount of dust in our area, adding one more mine nearby will make it far worse and significantly decrease our air quality - Increased air pollution from commercial vehicles in the area will also significantly affect our air quality

Please DO NOT allow this petition to pass. Keeping our water supply flowing and our air clean is of utmost importance to the health of those of us who live in the county. Having yet another gravel mine nearby will significantly impact our health in a negative way.

Sincerely,  
Dr Karen Weese MD  
Homeowner in Rancho San Marcos

## Jose Larranaga

---

**From:** Marc Choyt <reflective@cybermesa.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 11:36 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bahada Strip Mine

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I strongly oppose the proposed strip mine on La Bahada. The property in question is zoned residential/agricultural and is completely contrary to Santa Fe County's own sustainability criteria.

Given our current drought, and the outlook for drought in the future, we cannot afford to sacrifice the water needed for this operation. In addition, the area is of significance historically and to area wildlife.

The mine would also drastically impact the quality of life for all residents in the area.

There is a great wellspring of concern over recent issues happening in and around Galisteo Basin. From the Lamy, to the proposed Ortiz mine and this strip mine, the democratic consensus is that we want to preserve our land and quality of life. The opposition to these projects is growing every day. We are fighting for our future here.

As a business person and a concerned citizen, I urge you to oppose this plan and protect the citizens of Santa Fe County from these industrial projects that will drain our resources and reduce the quality of life.

Sincerely,  
Marc Choyt

--  
Marc Choyt

President, Reflective Images Inc.

Director: [Fair Jewelry Action, USA](#)

[www.artisanweddingrings.com](http://www.artisanweddingrings.com)

[www.celticjewelry.com](http://www.celticjewelry.com)

skype: circlemanifesto

email: [reflective@cybermesa.com](mailto:reflective@cybermesa.com)

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Reflective Images Inc.

912 Baca Street

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** bensondesi@aol.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 11:40 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Labajada Mine

I strongly object to the Labajada Mine project. I live in the nearby area and I see no good reason for mining to destroy the area. Is making money all that important????

Martha Benson  
94 Haozous Rd  
87508

**Jose Larranaga**

---

**From:** Robert Benedetti <benedettir@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 2:13 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** Penny Ellis-Green; Robin Gurule; Robert A. Anaya; Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Categories:** Red Category

**The proposal to mine a 50 acre section of La Bajada Mesa is outrageous! The mesa is part of the historic landmark that the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance (NMHPA) has recognized as one of New Mexico's "Most Endangered Places". Mining there would destroy its unique character. Please say NO!**

**Dr. and Mrs. Robert Benedetti  
Santa Fe**

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Anna Brown <[anna@mediagirl.com](mailto:anna@mediagirl.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:59 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** Penny Ellis-Green; Robin Gurule; Robert A. Anaya; Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Categories:** Red Category

To the citizens representatives of Santa Fe County & NM,

I cannot communicate how strongly I **oppose the application to mine on La Bajada Mesa.**

I grew up in Cerrillos, NM and have driven the Waldo Rd more times than I can ever count. The mesa is part of my childhood, it's part on Santa Fe County and it's part of NM.

It's what makes "New Mexico True"!! New Mexicans can't say how historical, beautiful and amazing NM is while slowly allowing the state to be dismantled.

As citizens representatives, please protect NM. Do not approve this application to mine on the mesa. If you need a practical reason, deny it because we don't have water to be giving away.

Anna

-----  
Anna Brown  
[MediaGirl, Inc.](http://MediaGirl, Inc.)  
Tel: (505) 205-1597  
[anna@mediagirl.com](mailto:anna@mediagirl.com)  
Twitter: [@mediagirl](https://twitter.com/mediagirl)

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Brendan Shepherd <bswriter@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 10:27 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Mining permit in La Bajada

**Categories:** Red Category

Dear Mr. Larra

As a land owner in Santa Fe County I strongly oppose the proposal to allow mining in the area of La Bajada. Foremost, as you well know, we have been in a consistent water shortage, and the use of millions of gallons of water for this mine is unacceptable. This will be an environmental disaster not only to the water supply, but also to the land and to the overall historical value of La Bajada and the entire area. Quality of life is important to all of us; please do not approve this mining permit. I would appreciate an answer from you regarding your position on this matter. I want to understand what advantages it brings to the community you represent.

Brendan Shepherd, business owner in Madrid and homeowner in the Ortiz Mountains. 35 Grateful Way, Cerrillos NM 87010.

**Jose Larranaga**

---

**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 10:30 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Fwd: La Bajada  
**Categories:** Red Category

*Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID*

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** FW: La Bajada  
**From:** Hill Top Productions <[bill@filmprojection.com](mailto:bill@filmprojection.com)>  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green <[pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us](mailto:pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us)>  
**CC:**

I was told that sending this letter to Mr. Larra would not do any good unless I sent a copy to you. I don't understand, but here is a copy of the letter I sent yesterday. I hope you can put it to good use.

Thank you

Bill Hill

---

**From:** Hill Top Productions [<mailto:bill@filmprojection.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 9:00 AM  
**To:** 'joselarra@co.santa-fe.nm.us'  
**Subject:** La Bajada

Sir,

I have been informed that Santa Fe County staff is recommending approval to the recent application for mining La Bajada Mesa.

This is such a bad decision in so many ways, including the use of our limited water supplies and degradation of our environment.

La Bajada should be a National Monument, not a gravel pit. The aesthetic entrance to Santa Fe and Rio Arriba will be irreparably ruined.

The local people do not want this.

Please rethink your position as a representative of the people of Santa Fe County.



Thank you,

Bill Hill  
Hill Top Productions, LLC  
14 Pollito Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
Phone: 505-982-3191  
Fax: 505-438-4524  
[www.hilltopproductionsllc.com](http://www.hilltopproductionsllc.com)  
Like us on Facebook

## Jose Larranaga

---

**From:** colleen <c\_m\_mccann@cybermesa.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 6:37 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** Penny Ellis-Green; Robin Gurule; Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Robert A. Anaya; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC --- Buena Vista's mining application to mine La Bajada Mesa

**Categories:** Red Category

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I am writing to express my opinion and concerns about Buena Vista's application to mine La Bajada Mesa near Waldo Canyon off of I-25. Many issues were overlooked by the county when the application was approved. This application needs to be rightly reaccessed and disapprove of this mining operation.

The mining application needs to be reaccessed because of the adverse effects mining would have on Santa Fe county residents. In particular, the indiscriminate change in zoning laws from agricultural/residential to commercial use that adversely affects residential property values, the minimal fee charged (2 cents a gallon) to buy potable water from the county well on Rte 14 near the prison during a time of drought and the failure to refer to and abide by sustainable land use laws.

The proposed mining activities of Buena Vista's are detrimental to Santa Fe county residents in many ways. Below are several questions I have about the approving this application and the reasons why I think this mining operation is a bad choice. I trust this information will sway your decision to reaccess and disapprove of Buena Vista Estates & Rockology LLC's mining application in order to protect land and potable water sources, property values, and the health and well being of Santa Fe county residents.

1. Santa Fe County and most of the country has been in a severe drought.

Why are you supporting a proposal that would waste a potable water source by using water from the county well on Rte 14 for an unneeded gravel mining operation?

Was the county's decision to give Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC unlimited water rights to use potable water for a "25 year" mining operation an oversight?

Why is the county considering giving away large amounts of "potable water" in a time of severe drought from the well on Rte 14 for a ridiculously low and minimal fee?

Buena Vista opened a \$200.00 water account for potable water well on Rte 14. Water restrictions for this well are 2.1 acre feet a year. This company is predicting an estimated 710,000 gallons per year for "DUST CONTROL alone." Is this a good use of potable water or a good source of revenue when the county is selling it at "2 cents" a gallon in a time of drought? Is this an outdated water fee for potable water?

Are water catchment and "water recycling" procedures included in their proposed plan?

2. I am curious as to why this mining operation (and other commercial enterprises) are not lawfully required to use grey water, rather than, potable water sources for such endeavors?

The county produces grey water at the water recycling plant.

Why is grey water not sold for revenue and used as a water source for commercial use?

3. NM has been in a drought for over 14 years. The amount of water the Buena Vista mining project will use in the next 25 years from the county well on Rte 14 is hundreds of thousands of gallons of "potable" county water. Are you aware many households draw water from the well on Rte 14 to supplement their water for household use due to non-productive and/or failing wells?

4. There are watering restrictions required by law in Santa Fe because of drought. Shouldn't a watering law be carried over to commercial endeavors? There should be "no favoritism" in water use for commercial endeavors especially during extreme and extended times of drought!

5. As we enter a 14th year of drought, Santa Fe County will again be in severe high-risk fire area. Many areas along the Rte 14 extend east into Rancho Viejo and El Dorado and to points west to I-25. This area is flanked by severely dry, flat plains that are frequently visited by high winds. Fires in this area can easily break out, spread to wide area and get out of control. Where will water come from to service these areas in times of fire if Buena Vista runs Rte 14's county well dry?

6. What is the county's back-up plan to service potable water to towns? We have been in and severe drought conditions for over 14 years with future droughts predicted. Reservoir levels are well below the norm and aquifers have not been replenished with rain water or snow. If the county well on Rte 14 runs dry from Buena Vista's excessive use of water for their private commercial enterprise, where will Cerrillos, El Dorado, Rancho Viejo, Madrid and other outlying areas get potable water from? And, ... how will residents pay for this?

7. Buena Vista's 50-acre parcel of mining operations will deplete potable water resources on Rte 14 and also destroy what has been a historical, cultural and environmentally significant landscape to New Mexico's tourism for hundreds of years. Was an environmental impact study done? Were archeologist studies submitted and read cover to cover? What were the findings of this area? Do the Pueblo Govenors agree with these findings?

8. There is no shortage or imminent need for another basalt gravel mine in the County or another gravel mining operation off of I-25. Several suppliers already exist and supply these materials within that same area.

9. The **current owners of Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC have "no protected rights" to demand a re-zoning of their property** which is currently zoned agricultural/residential to commercial zoning. The intended zoning is in place for good reason and needs to remain as is.

10. Re-zoning of this property from agricultural to commercial would affect residential property values and the livelihood of nearby residents in this proposed mining area.

Noisy, dirty, commercial endeavors devalue residential property values. Selling a residential property with noise and dust pollution from a 25-year proposed period of: blasting, multiple crushers, trucks hauling debris from nearby mining would legally need to be revealed in a Real Estate contract as an "adverse material fact," meaning, something negative is or can adversely affect a property owner's health and happiness, and decrease the property's value. Generally speaking, adverse material facts are unattractive selling qualities that do NOT attract real estate investors or raise real estate values.

11. The County has no obligation to enhance the economic value of Buena Vista's property for its owners while depleting the community resources and devaluing their neighbor's property value due from the adverse material facts created by their mining . Overall, mining operations are detrimental to county residents and residential real estate investments.

12. Creating a mining eyesore along the pristine environment along I-25 that leads into Santa Fe and Waldo Canyon and Galisteo Basin park lands that are sustainable economic and cultural resources would be detrimental to New Mexico's tourism. The Mesa needs to be preserved as open space for the welfare and culture of the county, city, state, and the country.

13. The county made approved the application in error. The county approved the application based on outdated laws of 2006. They did not abide by the sustainable land laws that are in place.

I trust you are innately fair-minded and will do what's best to protect the rights of Santa Fe county citizens. With these new facts and errors in mind, you can make better educated and sound ethical decisions about the implication of approving this commercial endeavor. To reiterate my points I will say, the county should seriously reaccess Buena Vista's mining application because of failing to:

1- adhere to current sustainable law for land and water use

2- update potable county well and water usage laws while considering the amount of water used by commercial enterprises so as not to deplete potable water sources during times of drought. The amount of water used for commercial enterprises **SHOULD NOT** be unlimited or at the business owners discretion.

3- New laws and standards need to be specifically written for the Rte 14 county well so that county residents have a reservoir of protected potable drinking water. Current drought conditions, and failing water wells are causing water problems for residential home owners.

4- Water usage for large commercial endeavors in Santa Fe county needs to be more closely monitored. The county should also address using grey water as opposed to using potable drinking water for commercial purposes to protect potable drinking water rights and potable water drinking resources for Santa Fe county residents.

5- Re-zoning the La Bajada from an agricultural area to a commercial mining area was unethical and unfair to local residents in that area. A person's happiness and quality of life in their retirement years can be deeply compromised due to unexpected decreases in their property value caused by adverse material facts from mining due to an indiscriminate change in zoning laws that were approved by the county. Adverse material facts legally need to be written into Real Estate contracts, i.e.; noise and dust pollution emanating from an a mining operation can cause ill health. Adverse material facts decrease property values. People's health and their livestock's health can be compromised by airborne dust which results in allergies and asthma.

6- Cultural artifacts from archeological studies need to be protected in this proposed mining area.

7- water catchment harvesting and recycling procedures should be included in their proposed plans

In closing, my final remarks are to keep the La Bajada area free from Buena Vista mining operations is a **GOOD CHOICE**. Keeping the original zoning in place would protect archeological sites that attract tourism and not cause ANY threats to Santa Fe county residents' property values, livelihood or potable water reserves that people rely on. It is the right decision to make.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Colleen McCann

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Jim Janis <jimmyj96@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 26, 2014 7:44 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bajada mine permit

I am a resident of Cerrillos, NM, in Santa Fe County, and enjoy the scenic beauty of La Bajada every day. I'm writing to ask you to not grant the permit for the proposed gravel mine that would mar this national treasure forever.

The gravel pit is not needed since there are several others nearby. It would use a tremendous amount of water, create dust and air pollution, and not provide any economic benefit to our community since only 7 jobs might be involved. That is an enormous cost for very very little benefit.

I hope that you will not allow this mine to proceed to mar our beautiful neighborhood.

Sent from my iPad by Jim Janis, PO Box 749, Cerrillos, NM 87010

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Thomas McIntosh, RPA <jeraii@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 7:55 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** La Bajada Mining Proposal

Hi Jose,

I, and many of my colleagues in the New Mexico Archeological Council are highly opposed to any development on La Bajada Mesa. Among the many reasons for our opposition is the underlying potential of the venture to permanently alter a rare cultural landscape that has inspired many millenaea of local populations, and which has in recent times, economically stimulated hundreds of thousands of tourist-guests in the Santa Fe region and northern New Mexico. I urge you to include my comments and those of my colleagues in all discussions that relate to permit approval of the La Bajada mining venture. We will appreciate any comments from you and your office regarding this proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas McIntosh  
Registered Professional Archaeologist  
Post Office Box 23753  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502  
505-982-2341  
[jeraii@aol.com](mailto:jeraii@aol.com)

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Delise9999 <delise9999@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2014 9:29 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Letter for the Record re. preservation of La Bajada Mesa / Request to decline application for mining i.e. Buena Vista/Rockology LLC

Dear Mr. Larranaga:

There is a broad coalition of residents, institutions, organizations and businesses in Santa Fe County that support the preservation and protection of La Bajada Mesa and the escarpment for its renowned cultural, historical, and environmental attributes.

We do not support mining in this location for the following reasons:

- 1.) Mining in this site would result in the degradation of NM cultural landscape that has been historically, culturally and environmentally significant to New Mexico for hundred of years.
- 2.) Mining the Mesa would ruin the geological integrity — the grandeur of this oceanic Gateway along I-25 into Santa Fe & Waldo Canyon Road - the road into the Galisteo basin park lands, a sustainable and growing economic resource. The Mesa needs to be preserved as open space for the welfare of the county, city, state, and thus the nation.
- 3.) There is no need for another basalt gravel mine in the County or another gravel mining operation off of I-25 as there are several existing gravel mines within reasonable proximity that can provide these materials.
- 4.) The current owners have no protected rights to demand a rezoning as they purchased the property with the current agricultural/residential zoning in place. The County has no obligation to enhance the economic (sold by the cubic yard) value of the property to the detriment of the County and State as a whole.

We are respectfully requesting that the application to mine La Bajada Mesa by Buena Vista / Rockology LLC be declined. Thank you.

With regard,

Dianne Elise Strauss

*President, Portfolio Group  
Santa Fe, NM*

December 12, 2013

Jim Siebert  
915 Mercer Street  
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505

**Re: CDRC CASE # Z/DMXT 13-5360 Buena Vista Estates & Rockology LLC**

Mr. Siebert:

This office has conducted a preliminary review on the above referenced submittal. Several concerns on the Application were discussed and it was decided that this Application should be deemed incomplete until such time that the following items are addressed:

1. The acreage of disturbance for each Phase shall be defined on the plans.
2. Total acreage of disturbance of the mine site shall be defined on the plans.
3. The haul route for the water trucks providing water to the site shall be defined in the report.
4. Interior circulation of equipment and trucks shall be defined on the plans.
5. Provide information (proof) that the material being mined on the site is sufficient for the duration of the expected mining period. (Have samples of the material been obtained at different depths to prove availability?)
6. Topography after each Phase of disturbance shall be provided
7. A topographical plan shall be provided to illustrate what the topography will look like at the end of Phase III.
8. Implement mining techniques that create a low impact overtime by disturbing a smaller area of land in each Phase and providing reclamation at the end of each Phase rather than excavating a large sum of land at one time.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 986-6296.

Sincerely,

Jose E. Larrañaga  
Development Review Team Leader  
Fax-(505) 986-6389  
joselarra@santafecountynm.gov

N13B-184



**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Peggy Cooke <17amie52@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2014 5:05 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** mining in the Galesteeo

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

I'm learning about a plan to mine the La Bajada Mesa - arguments against it make sense to me (if accurate):

- 1) it would take water to accomplish the mining and water is already a scarce resource in the area
- 2) other gravel mining operations exist that could supply the road materials
- 3) current owners purchased the land with agricultural/residential zoning - permitting a re-zone to the financial benefit of an owner is not responsible, considering the cost to the county residents (loss of water, loss of historical & cultural value)
- 4) preservation of The Mesa has value - environmental and geological - such a massive mining operation would blacken the New Mexico legacy and take us backward in our State's efforts to responsibly preserve our land and resources
- 5) mining in an area that draws hundreds of visitors would discourage the tourism industry - why hinder one economic industry that supports many for the benefit of land owner

Thank you for considering my input as this mining permit is considered.

Peggy Cooke  
Eldorado of Santa Fe

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** madridtext@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 14, 2014 1:53 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** proposed la bajada gravel mine

Hi,

I am writing to express my opinion (shared by many) that the proposed La Bajada gravel mine is not a sound location for such a project nor do I approve of using "county" water for such a project. Noise, dust, truck traffic and of course the use of water is wrong for a beautiful place that is not only a draw for tourists but the very reason many of us continue to live here. All in All...bad idea, leave La Bajada alone.

Jeffrey Seppanen -Seppanen & Daughters FINE TEXTILES Madrid, NM 87010 tel. 424-7470

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Barbara Ansel <bak@q.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 01, 2014 1:29 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

February 1, 2014  
To Whom It May Concern,

We would like to register our opposition to the proposed Rockology/Buena Vista application to mine for gravel on La Bajada near the Waldo Road exit. We have been residents of Santa Fe County for 38 years and do not think that this project serves our county's economic or environmental interests. In specific, we oppose it for the following reasons:

- The geology of La Bajada is unique and disturbing its geologic integrity will forever mar the beautiful entrance to Santa Fe via RT.25.
- Any jobs and resources for local residents are negligible compared to the impact of the mine.
- At a time when we are facing severe drought, it is unconscionable to use the amount of water it would take to avoid dust pollution from the project or reclamation of the site. From where we live, we can see the destruction of the Vulcan/ Santo Domingo gravel mine which resulted in serious dust storms last summer during the drought. Our scant water resources need to be preserved for the people of the county, not businesses that will come and go, leaving behind irreparable environmental damage; the inevitable erosion and loss of soil which will demand even more water.
- The possibility of additional large scale mining if the applicants acquire both water rights and land is a concern and stopping the project at this point would be wise.

Thank you for considering our objections. We hope the county will decide in favor of our land, water and people.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Ansel  
Bart Kaltenbach  
36 Woodstock Ln.  
Madrid, NM 87010  
505-984-1254

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Pat Brown <patbrownkw@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 2:23 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** murlock@raintreecounty.com  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

I am writing to you regarding this proposal. I grew up on this ranch in the early 60's to the late 70's. As a child cowboy this land has left a great impact on my life. The cliff line separated our upper pasture from our lower pasture and is rich in history. Many petroglyphs exist along this escarpment and is evidence of past cultures. The land behind the cliff has lots of relics in it, evidenced by shards and other artifacts just below the surface. I believe the area has tremendous historical significant that precedes even the first known men in the area by establishing the volcanic activity that was a part of creating this area. To destroy even a part of this is something that can not be replaced. I ask you to oppose any effort to destroy this area.

Kindly yours,

--

L. Pat Brown  
Keller Williams Realty  
130 Lincoln Ave., Ste. K  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-988-3700 O  
505-469-1203 M  
[PatBrownKW@Gmail.com](mailto:PatBrownKW@Gmail.com)  
<http://PatBrownSantaFe.KWRealty.com>  
FOR ALL YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS.

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Jennifer LaBar-Jaramillo  
**Sent:** Monday, January 13, 2014 11:53 AM  
**To:** Katherine Miller; Erik H. Aaboe  
**Cc:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** FW: La Bajada gravel pit

All,  
I just spoke with Mr. Brown. His concerns are written below, but wanted to make sure you are aware of this since he does not get a response back from Commissioner Anaya. The Village is working on getting organized to come down to the February 20 meeting. There is also a master plan to create a mining zone in the same area (will be heard around March, per Jose).

There is also interest for the south face of the Ortiz Mountains to blast/mine as well (for gold), no submittal has come to the County yet.

The community is worried that the County will issue mining permits all around them, "destroying the landscape and beauty of the area".

*Jennifer LaBar-Jaramillo*

Santa Fe County Manager's Office  
(505) 986-6293  
[www.santafecountynm.gov](http://www.santafecountynm.gov)

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**From:** P. Brown [<mailto:brownp52@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 10, 2014 2:50 PM  
**To:** Jennifer LaBar-Jaramillo  
**Subject:** La Bajada gravel pit

Jennifer, Constituent Services Liaison,

I am reaching out to you for some help here. Can you please discuss this with the County Manager. There is a private gravel company trying to get an application to tear down La Bajada Mesa which is the dividing line for Rio Abajo & Rio Arriba in New Mexico. The gravel mine would be located at Interstate 25 & CR 57, the Waldo Rd. There is already a gravel pit at CR 57 & Interstate 25 using the road with over 50 semi's each day, tearing down one the Cerrillos hills. We do not think tearing down La Bajada Mesa is a good idea either. Everyone in the area is upset about this. It is a beauty point in our view shed. The company has just gotten the okay to buy chlorinated drinking water from the hauling station at the County jail, to pour on the ground for dust control. We do not think this is a good idea as it is our drinking water for the future. I am enclosing a letter that I have written to the case worker Jose Larranaga. As President, representing the village association, I am letting you know - We do not need another gravel pit eyesore along the Interstate. We do not want this project approved. Please call me or email me with an update, if possible. The County hearing is February 20, 2014.

Todd Brown

Las Candelas de Los Cerrillos community association  
Cerrillos, New Mexico

Jose,  
I live in the village of Cerrillos and use County Road 57 quite often to reach the Interstate. Where CR57 meets I-25, there is already a large working gravel pit. There are over 50 trucks leaving it a day. I do not think that we need another gravel pit across the road from the existing one, stripping out La Bajada volcanic mesa lava flow. There is just no reason for it.

With all the gravel pits being developed on Interstate, the views are getting chopped up and destroyed. It is an eyesore. We do not need another gravel pit eyesore added along the Interstate.

Concerning the water trying to be used for the gravel pit. It is County chlorinated water from the County jail fill station and I do not think this is a good idea either. It is a complete waste of drinking water to be sprayed on the ground and wasted for dust control. Our water is too precious.

Please do not let this gravel pit go in. 1. We want to retain the view. 2. There are enough gravel pits on the Interstate already. 3. It would be a waste of chlorinated water we will need in the future.

Please remember that La Bajada Volcanic Mesa is the line between Rio Arriba and Rio Abajo. It should not be disturbed. It is original landscape and we all love looking at it.  
sincerely, Todd Brown

Casa Grande Trading Post, Mining Museum & Petting Zoo  
Cerrillos, New Mexico

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Elizabeth Buchen <esbuchen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2014 11:57 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Mr. Larrañaga,

I am writing to strongly OPPOSE any mining on La Bajada Mesa. I was born and raised in Santa Fe and have lived for most of my adult life in Albuquerque, frequently returning to Santa Fe to visit family and for work. The drive from Albuquerque to Santa Fe is very special to me, and cresting La Bajada hill always fills me with a sense of awe at the beauty of the scenery. This is an important part of my heritage as a New Mexican, and I urge you to protect it for future generations.

Those are my honest, personal reasons for caring about this issue. There are also many logical and practical arguments, many of which have been articulated by the Rural Conservation Alliance (see below).

Please keep all of these concerns in mind as you consider this case.

Thank you.

Elizabeth Buchen, MD  
505-577-5361

## **PRESERVATION**

**--La Bajada Mesa, listed by the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance as a Most Endangered Place, is the gateway to the city of Santa Fe and needs to be a protected cultural landscape. The arts, including paintings, drawings, pottery, photographs and films attest to the profound significance of La Bajada Mesa to New Mexico's culture and economy.**

**--The current owners have no protected rights to demand a rezoning as they purchased the property with the current agricultural/residential zoning in place. The County has no obligation to enhance the value of the property (which is also for sale) to the detriment of the County and State as a whole.**

## **IMPACTS**

**--Mining the Mesa would ruin the geological integrity--the grandeur of this oceanic Gateway along I-25 into Santa Fe & Waldo Canyon Road, the road leads into the Galisteo basin park lands, a sustainable and growing economic resource.**

**--Mining in this site would result in environmental and cultural degradation of a landscape that has been historically, culturally and environmentally significant to New Mexico for hundreds of years.**

--Development of such an industry poorly sited on an otherwise open landscape would result in impacts including increased pollution from carbon emissions and fugitive dust from multiple crushers, conveyors and heavy industrial traffic, along with blasting and night lighting.

--Mining in this location would not only negatively impact the Gateway vista from I-25 and Waldo Canyon Road--the western access to the Cerrillos Hills State Park--but would be a blight from the higher elevations of the trails that lead from the Cerrillos Hills State Park on BLM lands up Grand Central Mt. and from other recognized scenic vistas from the south and east.

--No visual impact report has been done for views from I-25, Waldo Canyon Road, the higher trails above the Cerrillos Hills State park, NM 14, and residential areas.

--The New Mexico State Parks, through the "Cerrillos Hills/Galisteo Basin State Park Feasibility Study" in 2006 concluded that the best access to the future state park would be from the I-25 corridor. An intensive expanding mine in this location along Waldo Canyon Road would have a discouraging impact upon a significant number of park visitors encountering unanticipated industrial activities, including the trucks on the road and the visual impacts of the mine itself.

--There is no need for another basalt gravel mine in the County or another gravel mining operation off of I-25 as there are several existing gravel mines within reasonable proximity that can provide these materials to Rockology itself, an Albuquerque based company.

--Reclamation would be next to impossible after stripping some 20 feet of basalt. There is little surface topsoil to set aside for reclamation. There are no strong standards to insure that reclamation would be a success and there is the likelihood that what would be left behind would be an endless source of dust.

## **WATER**

--Hauled water should not be considered adequate for long term mining operations. Santa Fe County should develop a policy that does not by default provide water to all Developments of Countywide Impact including oil and gas, mining, CAFO's etc. and not allow them to evade needed acquisition of commercial / industrial water rights. When a proposed mine is sited well (which the Buena Vista / Rockology isn't) it should have its own long-term water supply on site so as to eliminate the impacts of water hauling that includes traffic hazards as well as additional carbonization and infrastructure impacts from heavy trucks.

--Precedence? With a precedent set for mining the Mesa, if a mining company were to buy any or all of the remaining thousands of acres that are for sale on the international market, what then would become the county's obligations in 1) allowing further mining to the new corporate owners and, 2) supplying precious water resources for the extractions?



--Because hauling water for needed dust control is expensive, and because the company may be underestimating the amount needed, it may be they simply will not keep the dust contained, and especially if state air quality enforcement resources prove inadequate in providing oversight.

--Can Buena Vista / Rockology be trusted to spend money on sufficient dust control? Contrary to Rockology's application of 2008 which claimed that the mined materials were needed for the Railrunner construction project, it was revealed by the press that NMDOT already had secured all the materials they would need. Their true intention appeared to be to start a 50 acre operation until at least 2020. Why should we trust them now in 2014 to go to the extra expense needed to haul sufficient water for dust control?

--The acre feet of water suggested by Buena Vista (2.19) is woefully insufficient to accomplish the intended uses, which in their application does not include reclamation.

--The amount of water needed is not clear. The application claims a total of 710,000 gallons a year or 2.19 acre feet, which we think would be woefully insufficient to accomplish the suppression of dust. Even this amount would generate thousands of heavy water haul truck passes a year and contribute to deterioration of our state and county roads, the repair of which the taxpayer would have to subsidize.

--In keeping with the county strategy to allow growth only where it is wanted and timely, this is also not a good location.

--It is not in the public welfare to use County water to open up an unsustainable relatively short-term operation that would degrade a long recognized historic and cultural landscape--a landscape that can otherwise contribute sustainably to the county's economic welfare through the tourist industry.

## **SPECULATION**

--The current owners have no protected rights to demand a rezoning for the extractive industry as they purchased the property with the current agricultural/residential zoning in place. The County has no obligation to enhance the value of the property by shifting its economic worth from the value of an acre to the cubic yard.

--The property is for sale on the international market. Buena Vista is marketing the entire property of approximately 5217 acres and is including in the purpose the mining of basalt and other minerals.

--The applicant is seeking to rezone a portion of La Bajada Mesa from agriculture/residential to mining for its narrowly focused economic interests. Any such mining zone would likely be subject to expansion. The whole mesa is capped by basalt. Example: in 2002 JR Hale Contracting proposed a 500 acre strip-mine there that overlaps the current 50 acres as [diagramed](#).

**--County staff in the past (2005 & 2008) recommend denial of the permit based on a "cadre" of reasons including the threat to historical and archeological resources and because they did not want to create a new mining zone. Has anything changed since 2008 that would make gravel mining in this location any more or less suitable? Less, YES! Since then, a State Park has become a reality offering a sustainable resource just east and down wind from the proposed mine site which is incompatible.**

**Erika A. Garcia**

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**From:** Marie Harding <mharding@synergiaranch.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 19, 2014 11:56 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Jose Larrañaga,

I am writing, not for the first time, to highly object to the mining of the Mesa. It was a bad idea before, and it still is.

The owners are demanding a rezoning of a property that they bought with agricultural/residential zoning. Why would the County take it upon themselves to change that, just to degrade the property that has otherwise important cultural, historical and environmental significance to New Mexico for hundreds of years. That Mesa is a geologic and scenic gateway to the historic city of Santa Fe, as well as the Galisteo basin park lands which are becoming a sustainable and growing economic resource. The Mesa needs to be preserved as open space for the welfare of the county, city, state, and the nation. It should be made a feature of the historic Santa Fe, not a mining pit.

There are other already existing gravel mines in the area that already adequately supply gravel needed. The County doesn't need yet another one, and in such a glorious place.

This query comes up frequently enough that it's a waste of money and resources to have to keep fighting to preserve this important landmark area. The most logical and gracious results could be obtained if the County could purchase the property and make it into a historic park, it would solve a lot of problems. I understand budgetary considerations and difficulties that might arise, but think of the money, time and effort that could be saved by the County, the gratitude of Santa Feans, as well as pride in such a landmark being preserved as your/our legacy!

Yours truly,

Marie Harding

Synergia Ranch  
26 Synergia Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87508  
Tel: 505 471 2573

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:21 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Fwd: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**Categories:** Red Category

*Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID*

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC  
**From:** Philip Metcalf <[pmetcalf@gmail.com](mailto:pmetcalf@gmail.com)>  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green <[pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us](mailto:pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us)>  
**CC:**

Dear Ms Ellis-Green,

Please oppose the mining of La Bajada. There are other mines nearby that can supply the same material.

LaBajada is the gateway to Santa Fe and should not be reduced to a mining operation.

Santa Fe and the surrounding community depend upon tourism for their livelihood. Tourists don't come to Santa Fe to see mines nor to breath the dust a mine creates - they come to experience the beauty of an unspoiled New Mexico landscape. The City, County, and State should be involved in efforts to protect and enhance the natural landscape, not to mine it.

Most importantly in a community that goes the extra mile to conserve water, it is outrageous to commit water to such an operation when all forecasts say that we will have less water in the future than we do at present.

Philip Metcalf  
Voting Resident of Santa Fe

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Jan Olsen <janolsen@cnsnp.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 10:29 PM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga; Penny Ellis-Green; Robin Gurule; Daniel Mayfield; Miguel Chavez; Robert A. Anaya; Kathy S. Holian; Liz Stefanics; murlock@raintreecounty.com; diane.senior@gartner.com  
**Subject:** La Bajada Mesa  
**Categories:** Red Category

Dear Mr. Larranaga and County Commissioners,

I wish to voice my hope that the County Commissioners will value the La Bajada Mesa for its beauty as the portal to our historic city of Santa Fe above its value to private enterprise for mining.

Please do the right thing and deny the application.

Jan Olsen  
Haozous Road  
Santa Fe

Don Van Doren  
351 Camino Cerro Chato  
Cerrillos, NM 87010

February 6, 2014

Jose Larrañaga  
Case Manager  
Santa Fe County  
P.O. Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Re: CDRC Case: Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I am a Santa Fe County resident and voter and strongly oppose the Buena Vista Estates / Rockology application to strip mine La Bajada Mesa.

The proposed mine location would have a highly visible, negative impact for miles around. The picture below shows La Bajada Mesa from a location to the southeast. The arrow points to the approximate location of the proposed mine.



Contrast this prominent location with the Caja Del Rio Quarry, which is already producing basalt-based gravel for the County. That quarry has a non-potable water source, and is well situated near the County landfill, minimizing additional visual impacts and creating a cavity that might later be filled with County refuse. The County should not permit a new strip mine on La Bajada Mesa when existing, better-sited options are available.

There are a number of other negative factors beyond the visual impact of this strip mine that make it critical that this proposed application be denied. Here are some of these issues:

- I understand that the applicant proposes to haul potable water from County facilities on Route 14. Is this the correct precedent to establish—County sale of potable water for private mining and industrial purposes? Is this the best use of a diminishing resource that should be available to meet the future needs of all residents?
- Dust from the mining activities as well as from water trucks and gravel hauling trucks over the dirt roads will degrade surrounding properties and those downwind. Has the applicant planned to haul sufficient water for the roads as well as for the mining operations?

NBB-198

- Have the costs been included to maintain or upgrade the County, State, and Interstate roads from the pounding of the trucks? (Paid for by us, not by Rockology).
- Noise from the blasting, digging, grinding, and pulverizing of the basalt will spread unimpeded for miles—where we live, there are no sounds except the birds, but that would change dramatically.
- Light pollution from security lights at night will be very annoying—many of us live here because we enjoy the stars in the dark skies.
- I understand that the applicant will need a zoning variance. If the site for the mine is rezoned, then the adjacent lands will become undesirable for less intensive purposes. Does this also establish a precedent to make future mining applications in this area easier to be granted? Buena Vista appears to own the rest of the mesa top surrounding this oddly-situated 50 acre parcel. Is this 50-acre application really just a precursor to mining the entire mesa top?
- What precedents are being established in this fragile place, and is this historic cultural landmark the place where we want this kind of destructive growth?
- The proposed site borders important wildlife corridors.
- Runoff will go to the Galisteo Creek and to the watershed that goes to the Rio Grande.
- Tourism is an important part of our economy. Tourists don't come to see strip mines.

The County has no obligation to grant the applicants' request. But our County officials do have an obligation to conserve our water resources and protect the landscape that sustains our local economy through film, tourism and the many people who are drawn here by the beauty of this place. Our open spaces and water are resources for the long term common good of all the citizens, taxpayers, and voters, not something to be pillaged and scarred for the short term profits of a few.

I sincerely hope you share this belief and will decide to deny this Buena Vista Estates/Rockology application.

Sincerely,



Don Van Doren  
3151 Camino Cerro Chato  
Cerrillos, NM 87010  
505-216-6612



**M**arc **S**immons  
Historian

P.O. Box 51  
Cerrillos,  
New Mexico 87010

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Feb. 1, 2014

José Larrañaga  
Santa Fe county Land Use Dept.  
102 Grant Ave.  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

I strongly oppose the pending application by Buena Vista to mine historic La Bajada Mesa. Its proposal to rezone property it now holds, presently zoned agricultural-residential, is entirely inappropriate, inasmuch as La Bajada Mesa possesses important scenic and historical values.

I trust you will give this matter your careful and serious attention.

Sincerely,

*Marc Simmons*  
Marc Simmons

NBB-200



## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Emilie Sederholm <anemilie9@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 6:59 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Cc:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Subject:** CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates &Rockology Limited LLC

**Categories:** Red Category

To Jose Larranaga, Case Manager

I am writing this letter to inform you that I am AGAINST the proposed mining project on La Bajada Mesa for numerous reasons, but in this letter I am addressing my concerns for the dust, the limited water issues, and the destruction of a beautiful cultural New Mexican landmark.

As a resident here on Camino Cerro Chato, whose home is in line with La Bajada Mesa, dust is already a way of life. There is not enough moisture to keep the dust and dirt naturally contained and so I deal with it. Before reaching work, I almost always have to dust myself off before entering my place of employment. I am constantly dusting and sweeping as it is and on a windy day it is a whole other ballgame. It frightens me to have to consider it could be dustier. I don't believe for a second that this mining company would actually care about the local residents to keep the dust contained, even if they were to procure enough water.

Which brings me to my second issue: water. I have no well. I have a very primitive rainwater collection system and more often than not, I have to haul in water to sustain my life here. Actually, most of the residences that I know of who have wells, also haul in water because it is often a desperate situation. Knowing first hand how infrequently it rains and how desperately we need it, I find it shocking that potable water, which is supposed to be allotted for the people who live out here, is being considered for this mining company. We have had a drought for over 6 years and my understanding of environmental concerns is that it is only going to get worse. There is already an existing mine: The Caja Del Rio Quarry is connected to a piped non-potable water system so it is not taking usable water from others to run. Why do we need another one? People need that water. Animals need that water. It should not go to the destruction of a cultural landmark.

And this brings me to the last issue in this letter. I choose to live out here. It is a two hour round trip to get to work each day. I have to haul in everything and as mentioned before, I am frequently covered in dust. Water is scarce and I am conscious of every drop I use. It is a challenging place to live. Yet everyday I look out at La Bajada Mesa and it is all worth it. I truly believe I live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. I can't believe it is even a question to destroy it. Do these mining companies/big businesses/corporations have to ruin everything? If you personally have not come and actually viewed what you are considering destroying, I beg you to do that. I beg you to show this big mining destruction company that Santa Fe county values and respects natural beauty, respects the needs of its people, and respects its cultural landmarks.

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Penny Ellis-Green  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 10:08 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Fwd: stop the threat to La Bajada Mesa and surrounding area

**Categories:** Red Category

*Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID*

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** stop the threat to La Bajada Mesa and surrounding area  
**From:** Bill Scruggs <[bionibilly45@gmail.com](mailto:bionibilly45@gmail.com)>  
**To:** Penny Ellis-Green <[pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us](mailto:pengreen@co.santa-fe.nm.us)>  
**CC:**

Ms Penny Ellis-Green,

As a resident of the Rancho San Marcos subdivision of Highway 14 south of I-25, I am **strongly opposed** to the proposed gravel mining at **La Bajada Mesa**. Such an operation would permanently damage the quality of life in our area and significantly depreciate our property values. It appears it would also have a similar impact on most of the surrounding housing and recreation areas besides just Rancho San Marcos. This concern is not just about air quality and heavy truck traffic, I also fear the irreparable damage the operation would cause to our aquifer and water table during a period when they are in jeopardy without the operation. Please do not permit this operation for the good of all of Santa Fe and the area to it's south which services so many residents.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns,

William M. Scruggs  
Resident and President, Rancho San Marcos Homeowners Association  
214 Calle Galisteo  
Santa Fe, NM 87508

## Jose Larranaga

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**From:** Jerry Rogers <jrogers@cnsf.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 10:41 AM  
**To:** Jose Larranaga  
**Subject:** Buena Vista Estates/Rockology Mine Proposal

**Categories:** Red Category

As a founding member and former President of the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance, the statewide citizen heritage preservation organization, I urge the Santa Fe County Development Review Committee not to approve mining on *La Bajada* Mesa as proposed by Buena Vista Estates/Rockology LLC.

In past years the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance has declared *La Bajada* Escarpment, the New Mexico Night Sky, and the Waters of New Mexico as endangered historic places. This proposed surface mine would have negative effects on each of the three.

*La Bajada* Escarpment and the mesa behind it constitute one of the most recognizable landmarks in all of New Mexico. It is no surprise that it served as the dividing line between the colonial administrative districts of Rio Abajo and Rio Arriba, that is was a major obstacle on *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* and historic Route 66, nor that it was an important part of the cultural landscape for millennia before the first Europeans reached this wonderful area. What is surprising is that this towering black line has survived with so little scarring from the sometimes careless works of our contemporary culture and that even such a major road as I-25 can still approach Santa Fe through a pleasant natural setting.

I urge the County planning staff, the CRDC, and the Board of County Commissioners not only to deny this regrettable proposal but also to take further steps to ensure the preservation of this very important part of our cultural, natural, and scenic heritage.

Jerry L. Rogers  
107 Calle Galisteo  
Santa Fe, NM 87508  
Former Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places  
Former President, New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance  
Former member, Santa Fe County Open Lands Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (COLTPAC)

Jose Larrañaga  
Case Manager  
Santa Fe County  
P.O. Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:

I am writing to you as a Santa Fe County resident and tax payer to let you know I strongly oppose the strip-mining of La Bahada Mesa.

First and foremost is the issue of water usage: The proposed mining area has no available water. The suggestion of trucking in water is ridiculous for several reasons.

First of all water is a scarce commodity in these parts. Santa Fe has to get water from the Rio Grande to supply the city with drinking water, because groundwater pumping and reservoirs are no longer a reliable source of drinking water during drought conditions. Now the county would sell this valuable water to a mining company?

The slightest interruption of the top soil can cause a major dust problem. The trucking in off all the water needed to battle that problem would be way too expensive for the mining company, which leads to the expectation they will do that as little as possible.

Still the increase of the amount of heavy traffic will be enormous, with all the resulting extra road maintenance to be paid for by the county's taxpayers

Secondly there is the problem of light and air pollution. There is a huge area in Santa Fe County looking down on La Bahada Mesa. Now the night skies are dark and full of stars, with lighting on the worksite that will be in the past. Wildlife, using La Bahada as a corridor will be severely disrupted. The dust, resulting from the blasting and excavation will reduce the visibility, already compromised by dust and wildfire smoke during the summer.

The fact that this pollution is very visible will also decrease the value of the many properties looking down on the Mesa, so again the taxpayers are duped .

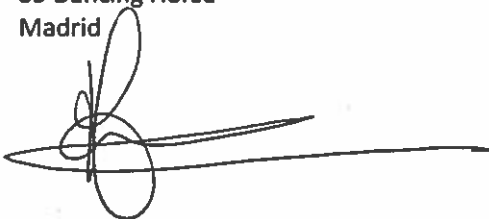
What does the taxpayer gain from all this?

There is no shortage of gravel, since the gravel pits in the area are far from depleted .

There won't be any new jobs for locals, as this is highly specialized work.

Kind regards,

Marc Hogenboom  
59 Dancing Horse  
Madrid

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a long horizontal stroke.

NBB-204

Jose Larrañaga  
Case Manager  
Santa Fe County  
P.O. Box 276  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Re: CDRC Case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Dear Mr. Larrañaga:


This letter is to let you know that I, as a Santa Fe County resident and tax payer strongly oppose the strip-mining of La Bahada Mesa.

Strip mining the Mesa would mean damaging the corridor through which Cougars and other wildlife travel between the Jemez Mountains and the Ortiz Mountains. The noise, dust and light of this mine would disrupt wildlife in a very large area. It would also damage the scenery for many Santa Fe county residents looking down on this Mesa.

Mining La Bahada Mesa would result in environmental and cultural degradation of land that has been historically, culturally and environmentally significant to New Mexico for hundreds of years.

The water needed for this project is not readily available on site, and even if it were it would be wasteful to use our valuable and scarce water for unneeded commercial enterprises.

There is no need for yet another grave mine as long as the existing ones are far from depleted.



Kind regards,

Wilhelmina W Steutel  
59 Dancing Horse

87010 Madrid

NBB-205

# John Herbrand

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February 12, 2014

Hand Delivered

Jose Larranaga  
Case Manager

Re: CDRC case Buena Vista Estates & Rockology Limited LLC

Mr. Larranaga:

It is my understanding that letters of opposition to the above-mentioned application should be directed to you and, as a resident of Santa Fe County and a registered voter there, I wish to register a serious objection.

Proposed development of the La Bajada Mesa and the La Cienega areas would impact the entire Santa Fe area by destroying historical and geological landscapes which are important to Santa Feans and to the overall economy of Northern New Mexico. Santa Fe County and the City of Santa Fe have talked about the importance of preserving the entrance of Santa Fe. However, we now have another proposed development alleging it will bring economic benefits to the community in the form of a miniscule number of jobs.

Right now, thousands of jobs in the Northern New Mexico are based upon a tourist business and a film industry which draw on the open views, the geology and the history of the area. Anything that endangers this source of income from out of the area is a direct threat to the livelihood of the entire community as well as a threat to the lifestyle and wellness of the entire community.

This entrance area to our community preserves the attraction of Santa Fe and plays a large part in the luring the people who support most of us. It joins history of early settlers, native, Hispanic and whites to the physical gifts of god to New Mexico. It helps produce the pride of the community in this place. As you enter Santa Fe from I-25, the signs read Museums and Historic areas next 5 exits to wet the appetite of travelers.

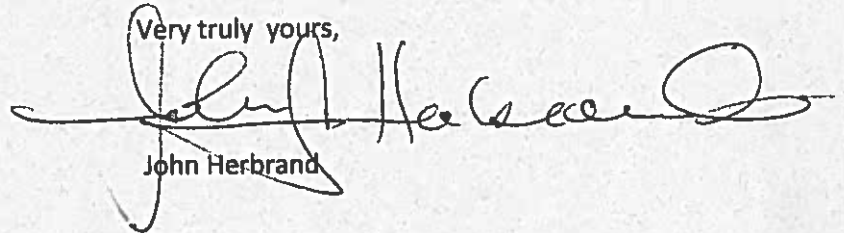
With the recent proposals of affordable housing and this proposal for mining, we only need to travel to Placitas to see what type of impact these type of developments would have on the entrance to Santa Fe. The area along the highway by Placitas is devoid of anything which enhances the lives of the members of the community. The mining draws truckers and outside residents for a few jobs, and the affordable housing along the highway seems to be misplaced. Development of the La Bajada Mesa for similar activities will cost the community rather than add to it.

NB3-206

The area is inundated with historical sites. The El Camino Real Trails cross the area and are listed among national historic sites endangered by this type of development.

Please understand that I oppose this type of activity in this area because I think that the area deserves better for the long term benefit of the community.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Herbrand". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Herbrand

NBB-207



Pierre and Dominique Werbrouck-Samyn  
341, Rogersville Rd  
PO Box 807  
Cerrillos, NM, 87010  
505-424 1742

To: Mr. Jose Larranaga  
County Review Committee Case Manager  
102 Grant Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM, 87501

Cerrillos, February 5, 2014

Re: Proposed Basalt Mining in La Bajada Mesa

Dear Mr. Larrañaga,

It has been brought to our attention that a hearing will take place on the above matter. Unfortunately we are traveling on the hearing day and cannot attend.

La Bajada Mesa is an important vista (view) point South of Santa Fe. The future of New Mexico does not lie in basalt mining but in tourism, technology, research, alternative energy and the promotion of cultural diversity. This is the reason why we came to live here, invested our savings and live a rural life close to nature.

We have a dude ranch and are artists. From our home we have a great view of La Bajada Mesa. Visitors (customers) to our dude ranch appreciate the view, the people attending art workshops love it and we are inspired by the view in our art. We attach hereto an artwork based on this view. We pay sales and income tax on our business as well as an annual property tax of about \$4,500 for which the county does not provide anything in return except the view; we have no children in education age, we live off the grid, and the county does not maintain Rogersville road.

Destroying this view would damage our business.

Moreover we learned that drinking water would be hauled from the Santa Fe County water supply to keep the dust down. We use only rainwater and during dry spells we would need to be supplied by the same water source as the mining operation. Considering the recent drought years, we conclude that using drinking water for dust control is a waste of scarce resources.

NBB-208



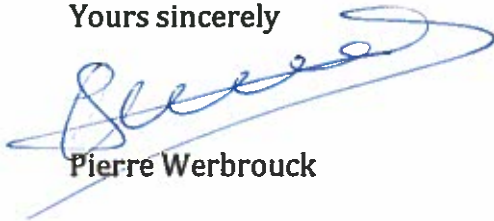
The mine application estimates some additional income from sales tax, which is not credible. First of all, most construction companies are exempt of sales tax except on the final product and there a significant substitution effect as some sales will be diverted from other gravel pits. Moreover the cost to maintain the roads will exceed the amount of sales tax that would be "really" additional, if any.

Hence we find that mining in areas that have touristic attractiveness is a bad idea, and the New Mexico economy will not see any real impact of such mine as it will only reduce business in other mines. The economic growth effect will be negligible. It is a better strategy for the NM economy to protect its beauty and views to attract people (like us) willing to pay annual property taxes or tourism dollars to enjoy the view. This strategy has been successfully applied in other states as well as in Costa Rica, which now benefits from an important immigration boom of US retirees. Mining is an economic activity of the past.

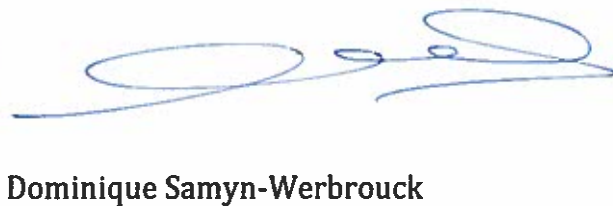
Therefore, I recommend you do not approve such mining.

Thanking you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Pierre Werbrouck



Dominique Samyn-Werbrouck

NBB-209



**'La Bajada # 2'** Acrylic and Venetian plaster on wood 40 x 40 inches.  
Part of the La Bajada Series.  
Work by Dominique Samyn-Werbrouck  
[www.awsam.com](http://www.awsam.com)



NBB-210