

Brett Wilkinson

I am not a NM resident but I have owned a home in Alto for over 12 years. I am deeply concerned about the impact of building a concrete plant in the Alto area. I would like to express three major concerns:

1. This is a unique environment and one of NM's ski resort towns. The plant risks that environment

This is the southernmost ski resort in the Rocky Mountain range. As a result, Alto is a unique mountain community in a region that many outsiders to NM perceive as being a southwestern desert. The majesty of the tall pines, the mountain air, the peace and quiet, along with the mountain terrain, combine to make this a special place. Not only does this special place serve as home to the locals, but it also draws tourists to NM from other states and from within the state. This serves to bring added prosperity to the region and to the entire state.

I would question the wisdom of building a concrete plant in one of the more precious and fragile environmental jewels of the entire state. The likelihood of environmental degradation, even at lowest estimates, imposes far too great a risk to this unique region. There is an abundance of space in NM and I would suggest that the more environmentally polluting production activities should be placed in regions where the (inevitable) costs to the environment will be much lower than they would be in this unique mountain area.

2. The plant imposes risks to tourism and other tourism-focused businesses

I don't oppose business development at all, but I would argue that the external costs of the concrete plant have the potential to damage other tourism related businesses in this area, if they diminish the aesthetic value of this unique mountain region. One business doesn't have the right to jeopardize the broader tourism-facing industry.

3. There are other options that present much less risk

Although I love all of NM, there are many places in NM that do not have the charm and tourist-drawing power of the Alto region. These other places are more barren, less mountainous, and less green. In contrast, Alto, along with places like Ruidoso, Taos, Red River, etc., offer something very different and very special. Moreover, it is something that, once lost, will never be able to be replaced.

We all need concrete and if there were simply no alternatives, I would understand the need to build the plant. However, there is an abundance of alternatives and it seems remarkably short-sighted to increase the risk to the area, when there are many other good options.

In summary, I ask you to consider the importance of this unique mountain region, that is popular within and without the state, and known for its special environment. I ask you to consider whether the costs that may be imposed by this plant on others, and the increased risks to other businesses in the community, are really justified, when there are other options open that present far less of a threat. Ultimately, I ask you to evaluate whether the citizens of NM would be better served by

placing a concrete plant in one of their more precious mountain environments, or would they be better served by protecting this precious natural environment by placing the plant in a less fragile environment?