

Jon Tipton

To: Jess Robinson, Office of Legal Services, TCEQ
Subject: Comments on "APO BMP List Proposal"

As a native Texan and 25-year resident of the Texas Hill Country, I am writing to provide feedback on the proposed Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Aggregate Production Operations (APOs). My proximity to a rock quarry less than 3/4 of a mile from my property has made me acutely aware of the negative environmental and community impacts of these operations, especially on water resources, air quality, and native wildlife.

Key Concerns and Recommendations:

Air Quality Impacts

The current BMPs suggest measures such as water sprays and dust suppression systems but fail to mandate regular air quality monitoring. Dust from APOs poses severe health risks, particularly for nearby communities. The BMPs should:

- Require real-time air quality monitoring with publicly accessible data.

- Include enforceable measures such as mandatory setbacks and vegetated buffer zones to reduce dust migration.

Water Resource Protection

APOs place significant strain on groundwater resources, which are vital to residents in rural areas. Wells near quarries often experience depletion or contamination due to APO activities. BMPs should:

- Mandate detailed groundwater impact studies before APO permits are issued.

- Require impermeable liners for process ponds to prevent groundwater contamination.

- Include measures for water reuse and conservation to mitigate the impact on local water supplies.

Wildlife and Habitat Preservation

The encroachment of APOs has led to habitat loss for native wildlife, reducing biodiversity in areas like the Texas Hill Country. To address this, BMPs should:

- Require environmental assessments to identify and protect sensitive habitats.

- Enforce replanting and habitat restoration efforts once quarrying activities cease.

Incorporating Texans for Responsible Aggregate Mining (TRAM) Recommendations

TRAM's extensive research and recommendations offer practical, enforceable BMPs that address the critical gaps in the current proposal. I strongly urge TCEQ to adopt TRAM's recommendations, including stricter setback distances, comprehensive water use plans, and enhanced dust control measures.

Compliance and Enforcement

While the BMPs provide excellent suggestions, many remain unenforceable. To ensure compliance:

- Implement stricter monitoring and penalties for APOs that violate BMPs.

- Require APO operators to submit periodic compliance reports verified by third-party auditors.

Personal Perspective:

The rock quarry near my home has caused visible reductions in well water levels, frequent dust clouds impacting air quality, and disruptions to the local ecosystem. These issues are not isolated but systemic, reflecting the need for robust, enforceable BMPs that protect both communities and natural resources.

I appreciate TCEQ's efforts to address these issues and encourage adopting stronger, enforceable BMPs to preserve the air, water, and wildlife of Texas. Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,
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