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After three years of study, TCEQ's rather limp reaction to addressing best management practices for aggregate mining looks like a waste of time and money. Not surprising, since public health is not TCEQ's priority. Too bad you are the organization entrusted to protect communities from the significant impact of aggregate mining and concrete batch plants.

If your organization took your responsibilities seriously, the BMPs would actually set expected standards for these largely unregulated businesses. Instead, there are myriad vague statements, using the ever-present term "reasonable." Deliberately hard to define, right?

TCEQ, you need to be more specific to turn these so-called BMPs into something actually useful:

- Recommend paved roads in and out of the sites to mitigate dust.
- Allow neighboring homes some night-time relief by specifying ways to eliminate sky glow, light trespass and glare (direct light properly, set up perimeter barriers).
- Protect our kids. Clear roads for school buses by not loading trucks for 30 minutes before and after school bells (think of Gunner, Tx).
- Help keep down site noise at APOs, aiming for noise levels below 65 dB if the property line is within 880 yards of a residential area school, or house of worship, and 70 dB if not. Set criteria using MSHA on-site guidance and experience with noise level limits from municipalities (nearby, if available) that have set noise limits.
- Recommend monitoring blasting using seismographs, located on the perimeter (corners) of the APO property (and in some instances, adjacent or near-by properties in multiple directions).
- Maximize the use of process wastewater, which cannot be discharged without treatment but can be reused in site operations. Encourage use of a tailings thickener system and/or flocculant and thickener (already key BMPs understood, accepted and utilized by many APOs). These facilities can provide additional recycled water to reduce overall APO water use, water loss and reduce land use.
- For river areas, suggest specific practices to preserve the quality of the land and water and reduce the risk of catastrophic "pit capture" (when a river breaks through the riverbank or constructed levy and merges with the mine pit, as has happened countless times in Texas, due to poor mining practices):
  - a. Maintain undisturbed setback from at least 50 feet from the water's edge and preferably 200 feet.
  - b. Create a buffer between mining activities and the waterway.
  - c. Leave large woody debris in the floodplain.
  - d. Mine above the water table only.
  - e. Minimize use of heavy equipment to protect vegetation and reduce soil compaction.

You will recognize all of these suggestions, because you ignored them earlier. And, of course, with no real transparency about decision-making, TCEQ will continue to ignore practical, common-sense BMPs that might help protect public health--if businesses even care to be good community members.