

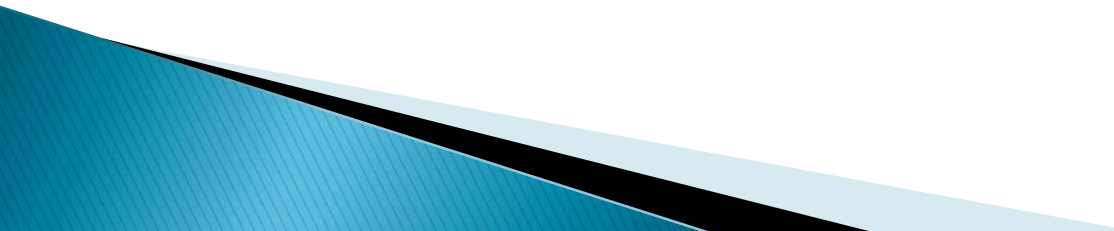
Writing Effective Comments on a CEQA Document

CORVA Comments Project

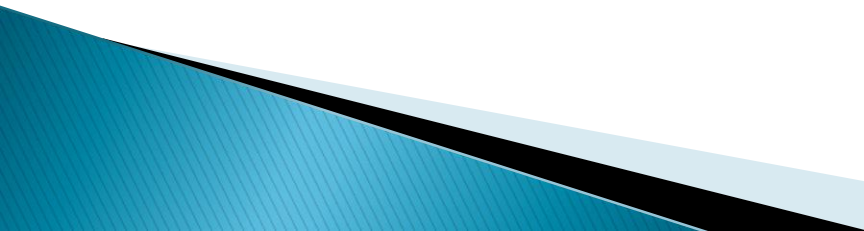
May 2015



5 Reasons Why You Should Comment

- ▶ The public process allows you participate in the once in a lifetime opportunity of designing an expanded SVRA.
 - Your input can help shape this project in a positive way.
 - ▶ If you are generally not worried about this project, then consider that it may still be built in ways that may negatively affect you – and it may not have to be.
 - The only way to make the agency aware of your individual, immediate concerns is to send in comments during this period.
 - ▶ This is your opportunity to address any concerns related to recreational, scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental issues.
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5 Reasons Why You Should Comment

- ▶ If you don't think your comments will have any effect.....
 - the only comments that are sure not to have any effect are the ones you don't write.
 - Those you do write must be considered and addressed.
 - ▶ If you do not comment, you forgo many of your rights to any recourse in the future if there were inadequacies that were not addressed.
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Writing effective comments

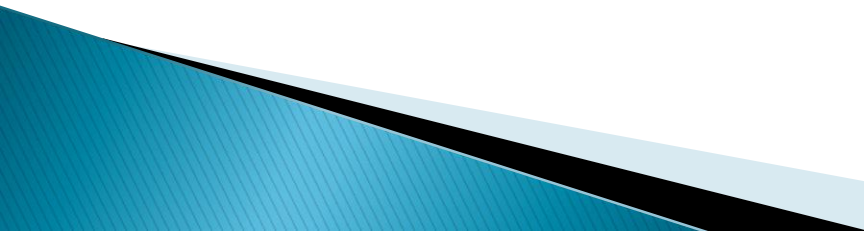
Objectively evaluate the project and be VERY specific.

- Generalities can be dismissed with generalities.
- ▶ **Separate your concerns into clearly identifiable paragraphs or headings and keep a tight focus on each separate issue.**
 - Don't mix topics.
- ▶ **Avoid saying “I support the Carnegie Expansion Project, but...”**

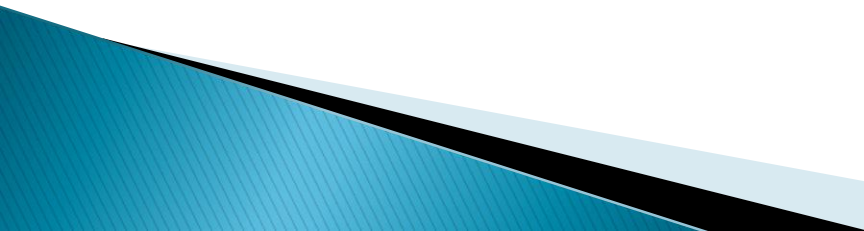
just list your concerns or your letter may be classified as a letter of support instead of addressing your concerns.



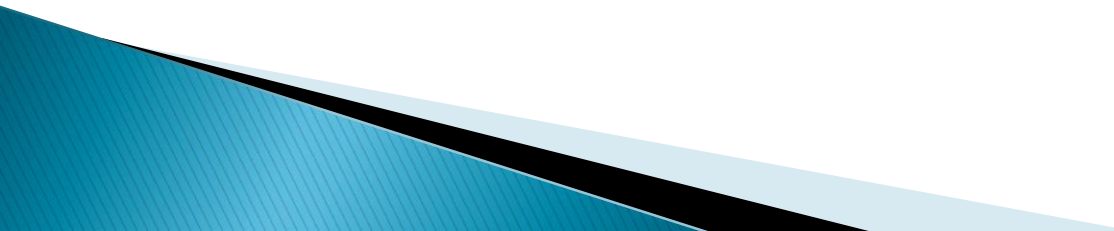
Writing effective comments

- ▶ **Whenever possible, present facts or expert opinions.**
 - ▶ **If not, provide personal experience or your personal observations. Don't just complain.**
 - ▶ **State what you are asking for or are concerned about relating to the project.**
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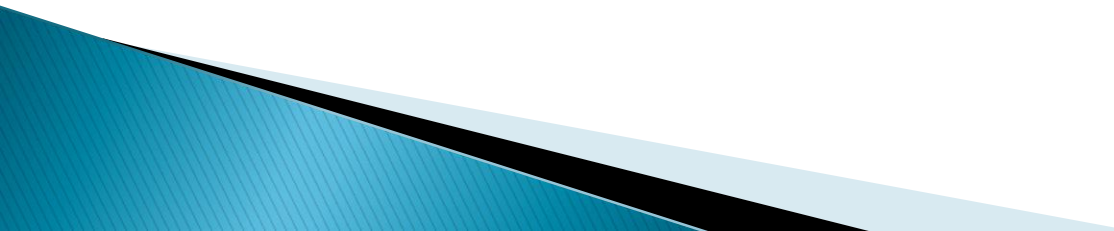
comments

- ▶ **Consider ways to avoid impacts or enforceable ways to reduce the severity of impacts.**
 - ▶ **Quantify your objections whenever possible.**
 - If a potential significant impact has not been adequately identified; or
 - if no mitigation has been proposed for a potentially significant impact; or
 - if the mitigation proposed doesn't appear to be sufficient or appropriate.
- 

Comments – impacts

- Identify the specific impact in question;
 - Explain why you believe the impact would or would not occur
 - Explain why you believe the effect would or would not be significant
- 

Effective comments

- ▶ **Include suggestions for making the project better**
 - Offer specific alternatives
 - Describe how your changes meet the requirements of the project.
 - Your goal should be to write something that causes them to respond in a future document based on the evidence you have given.
 - ▶ **Point out any inconsistencies in the document or the data.**
 - ▶ **Point out outdated information or errors in logic.**
 - ▶ **Focus on the sufficiency of the EIR in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts of the project on the environment.**
- 

How to send a comment:

- ▶ Write a comment that includes a valid name and address
- ▶ Submit before the June 29 deadline.
- ▶ **IMPORTANT:** If you make reference to ANY document in your EIR comments (a letter or notice you received, a law, a copy of a presentation you saw, you should include a full copy as part of your EIR comments.
- ▶ Think of your comments as testimony in a case.
 - Any documents you are submitting in the future might be considered evidence.
- ▶ Do NOT assume the Authority has a copy of any document you are referencing.

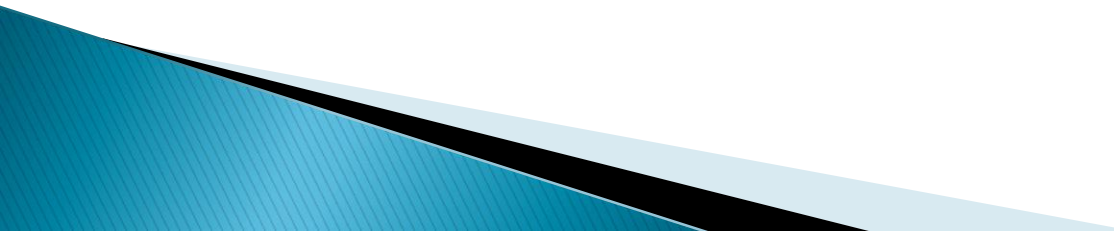
How to send a comment:

- ▶ Written comments should be submitted no later than June 29, 2015, to the following address:
 - California Department of Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division c/o AECOM, attn. Carnegie SVRA General Plan 2020 L Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95811
- ▶ Comments can also be submitted electronically <http://www.CarnegieGeneralPlan.com/DEIR-comments>, or by e-mail at carnegiedeircomments@gmail.com.

Sample comments

Rate them effective or ineffective

Example

- ▶ “We need more trails because trends show increased demand for OHV recreation.”
 - ▶ 1. General statement
 - ▶ 2. Should be supported by references showing need
- 

References

- ▶ **OHV recreation is popular in Alameda and other Bay Area Counties. OHV Registrations (green sticker) totaled _____ for a population of 2,253,600 (California Fuel Tax Study, 2006).**
- ▶ **OHV recreation is popular in the Western States. 17.6 % of the population over age 16 has participated in OHV use. 12% of population is 16 or older. (Cordell et al., 2008.)**
- ▶ Estimating the State Fuel Tax Paid on Gasoline Used in the Off-Highway Operation of Vehicles for Recreation: Survey Results, September 2006, Table 4.1, page 4-6. California State Parks.
- ▶ <http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/pages/1140/files/fuel%20tax%20survey%20report.pdf>
- ▶ Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States and its Regions and States: A National Report from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), February, 2008, H. Ken Cordell
- ▶ Carter J. Betz, Gary T. Green, Becky Stephens. USDA Forest Service, 2008.
- ▶ <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/IrisRec1rpt.pdf>
- ▶ Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States and its Regions and States: A National Report from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE); February, 2008
- ▶ Estimating the State Fuel Tax Paid on Gasoline Used in the Off-Highway Operation of Vehicles for Recreation; Survey Results, September 2006
- ▶ California Air Resources Board, Proposed Off-Highway Recreational Vehicle (OHRV) Evaporative Emission Control Requirements, www.arb.ca.gov/board/ma/2013/ma072513.pdf . July 25, 2013 .

Example

- ▶ “Trail XX should be included in the system because it allows green sticker vehicles to avoid the road from point x to point y.
- ▶ Significant issue
 - Trail XX is an alternative to the proposed action
 - The statement addresses alternatives or mitigation

comment

- ▶ The Carnegie Expansion will help reduce green house gas emissions (GHG) by reducing the need for enthusiasts to travel long distances in search of OHV opportunity.
 - The closest equivalent OHV areas are over 2 hrs away (Metcalf, Hollister, Stonyford)
 - Regional Parks do not offer equivalent opportunity
 - Cite exact distances, locations, travel times

Example

- ▶ “The existing road/trail from destination A to the combined use road to the west is not addressed in the document. This is an extremely important access route for all users. Without this route all routes to the south side do not have access to the camping area. This needs to be included in the proposal.
- ▶ **Response:** The road trail XXX has been identified and public input is being considered and evaluated for designation.

comment

I am opposed to the proposed Carnegie Expansion for the following reasons:

Endangered Species/plants animals

- ▶ California red legged frog and tiger salamander: the proposed open natural habitat will not allow for these creatures to survive. More space must be designated for natural habitats.

Traffic entry to the SVRA

- ▶ The new entrance to the SVRA should enter near the guard house to alleviate traffic

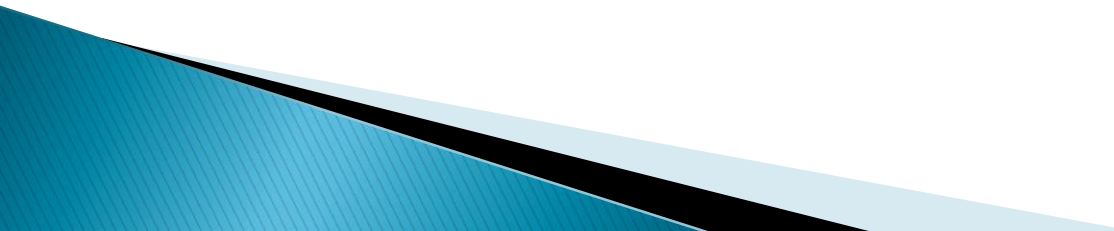
comment

- ▶ Management of the area according to General Plan Guidelines has adequately addressed special status species such as the red legged frog and tiger salamander.
- ▶ “With adherence to General Plan Guidelines, appropriate measures would be taken to avoid significant impacts to special species habitat. Development would be undertaken in consultation with wildlife agencies and qualified biologists.
- ▶ As a result impacts to special status species would be less than significant”
- ▶ Reference, General Plan DEIS Chapter 3 page 105.

comment

- ▶ “The Carnegie General Plan has sufficient detail for a general plan. The impacts of specific projects that follow are to be evaluated in project level plans that will follow.”
- ▶ Cite: **Section 15146. Degree of Specificity.**
- ▶ (b) An EIR on a project such as the adoption of a local general plan should focus on the secondary effects that can be expected to follow from the adoption, or amendment, but the EIR need not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific construction projects that might follow.

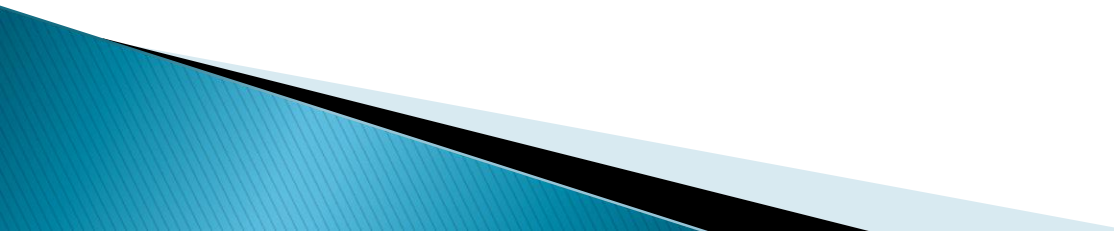
comment

- ▶ As a long time resident I am very concerned over the impact that the Tesla Park expansion will have on me.
 - ▶ I wish to go on the record requesting that the area be developed as a non-motorized facility.
- 

comment

- ▶ “The Tesla expansion area must be managed according to the OHMVR Strategic Plan goals and objectives. Development as a non-motorized recreation facility would fail to meet agency guidelines.”
- ▶ Reference – Carnegie DEIR Chapter 6 page 285:
 - “The planning area is classified as an SVRA by State Parks. Planning must be consistent with SVRA guidelines”
 - “The planning area was acquired with Trust Fund monies to expand the SVRA and provide additional OHV opportunity.”

comment

- ▶ We have read the environmental impact study and it has answered all of our questions and concerns. We completely support the EIR conclusions.
 - ▶ We are satisfied with the results they gathered.
- 

comment

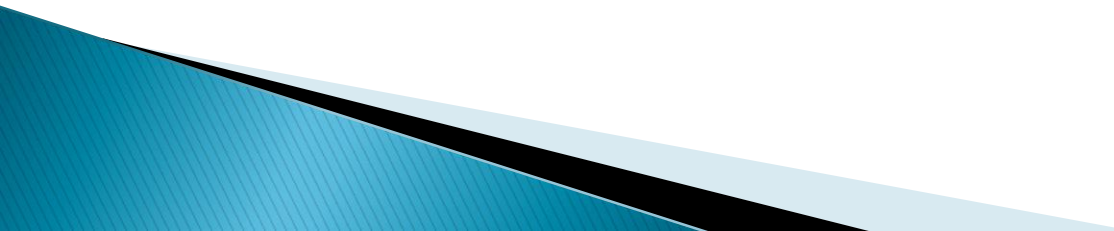
The DEIR fails to adequately identify, analyze and mitigate the visual impacts of the project.

The document does not analyze how each alternative would affect views of the hills from Tesla Road.

Instead, the document simply asserts that alternatives 1 and 2 may result in a reduced visual impact.

Never does the DEIR describe the severity and extent of the impacts as required by state law.

comment


- ▶ The Carnegie Expansion provides a unique opportunity for additional OHV opportunity.
 - Land was acquired specifically for this purpose with OHV funds
 - Location is adjacent to existing SVRA
 - Location is reasonably close to population centers where demand is high
- 

comment

The DEIR fails to contain a legally adequate project description.

The draft EIR provides such a general description of the proposed that it becomes impossible to evaluate either the project impacts or alternatives to the project.

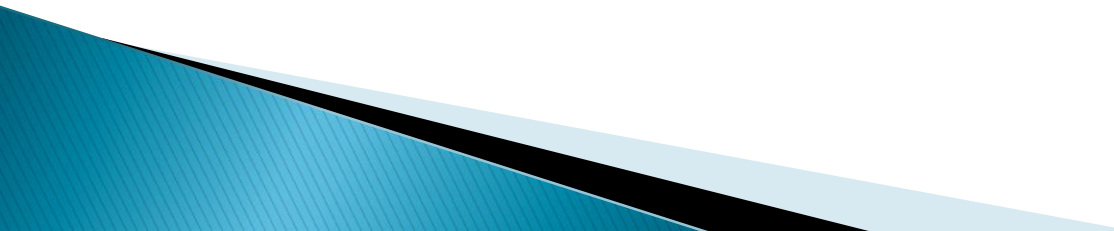
Because the EIR defines the project by reference to the goals of the project, rather than the actual physical improvements or changes necessary to achieve those goals, the discussion of project impacts is so vague as to be meaningless. As a practical matter this EIR does not actually analyze a project.



comment

We are vehemently opposed the Carnegie General Plan. We live nearby and the traffic, noise, & pollution resulting from such a large project would considerably detract from our already diminished quality of life.

I think the existing area is enough and the infrastructure will not be able to absorb this expansion. It is a bad idea for the state to approve this project.



comment

The QUALITY of LIFE I HAVE NOW is most IMPORTANT to ME.

My concerns are:

TRAFFIC INCREASE, additional noise pollution, additional air pollution,

loss of parking, loss of quick access to the park for Emergency

Vehicles

LIGHTING

stress of all night artificial lighting

loss of natural light in my home due to 9' concrete wall

LACK OF SPACE for AIR to CIRCULATE

9' concrete wall cutting off air circulation and encouraging mold growth, cockroaches, and rodents

Loss of view of ongoing activities of the bike path. Walkers with dogs coming to my wall for dog treats and stopping to chat. Bicyclers admiring the Bougainville [sic] as they peddle by.

comment

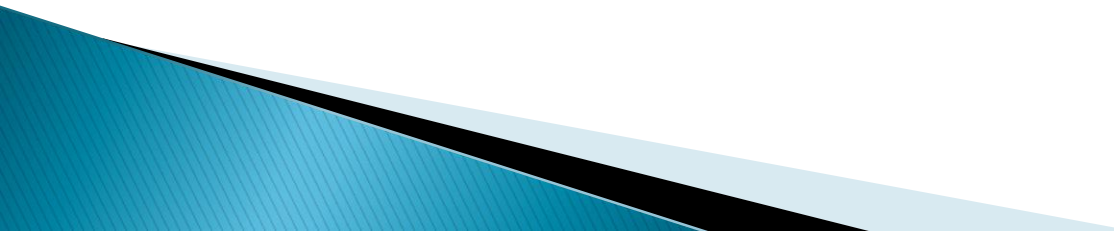
- ▶ The Carnegie Expansion project provides a unique opportunity for the Division to utilize an innovative approach to OHV management.
 - Unlike the existing SVRA, no “open riding area” is planned
 - Contemporary concepts in sustainable trail design can be employed to reduce maintenance costs and impacts such as soil loss
 - The General Plan and O&M Guidelines require protection of cultural and natural resources
 - Cite sections in DEIR

comment

Biological impacts are not fully disclosed.

- ▶ Recent tiger salamander survey results should be provided...etc.

Summary: the best comments

- ▶ Are specific to the project
 - ▶ Provide the agency with a solution
 - ▶ Address specific impacts of the project
 - ▶ Cite scientific studies or other references
 - ▶ If possible, provide new information for the agency to consider
- 

The End

