

County of Placer

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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To: District 5 Municipal Advisory Council

Subject: **Consensus Findings of Ad Hoc Air Pollution Advisory Committee**
Placer County Health and Human Services (HHS)

In an effort to provide a timely response to community concerns related to the health impacts of air pollution generated in the production and transportation of asphalt, Placer County HHS convened a local advisory group of physicians and health care professionals to attempt to summarize the current research regarding air pollution impacts.

The advisory group committee members are; Richard J. Burton, M.D., M.P.H. Health Officer & Director HHS, Michael Mulligan, M.D., M.B.A., Assistant Health Officer HHS, Michael Ashcraft, M.D., Daniel Foreman, M.D., and Richard Kramer.

This advisory group is appreciative, and aware of the following:

- The crucial role that well maintained roads and highways play in traffic safety and are grateful for the increased safety that will result from the appropriate maintenance of Interstate 80.
- That the appropriate regulatory processes are still in progress.
- That Teichert is implementing some of the best current technologies available to minimize air pollution emissions at the stationary site in Meadow Vista.

Placer County is one of six counties in a region that has already been identified as having poor air quality. It is from that starting point that the advisory group conducted a review of the current research and information available on the potential impacts of further worsening of air quality.

Having summarized the research, the group has sought to apply the known science to the concerns currently being expressed by the community in Meadow Vista. The group has made some recommendations for gaining further clarity of the issues. These are preliminary findings, and this advisory group will continue to refine the findings as more data becomes available for our review and we further consult with state and federal experts in the field.

Air Pollution arises from many sources and is affected by local climate, community geography, and traffic patterns. This group restricted its review of the literature to research related to asphalt production and the combustion products of gasoline and diesel fuels.

Some of the most important components of air pollution include ozone, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur oxides, and small emission particles. There does not appear to be any documented “safe” level of air pollution, in fact all research seems to indicate that all increases in air pollution carry with them increased risk for adverse health impacts.

Research on the health impacts of air pollution is constantly evolving. The most current research describes the impacts of air pollution as very similar to that of “second hand tobacco smoke”.

Exposure to air pollution can result in increases in lung cancer, heart disease, and chronic respiratory disease which may need to develop over many years before one actually experiences symptoms. Air pollution can also cause immediate worsening of asthma, heart disease, and chronic respiratory illness among individuals already suffering with these conditions. Finally, air pollution has recently been shown to cause asthma in otherwise healthy children and adults.

These and other health impacts can and do result in increased acute respiratory illness, increased missed school days, increased missed work days, decreased ability of individuals to participate in outdoor activities, and impaired lung development among children.

The seriousness of these and other health impacts of air pollution is cause for communities to assure themselves that all pollution-generating activities are evaluated for potential impacts, alternative approaches are considered, and pollution reducing controls are appropriately used in order to minimize likely negative health impacts.

It is the consensus opinion of this advisory group, that the intensive asphalt production and diesel truck traffic associated with the current Teichert proposal with its associated increases in air pollution in close proximity to homes, play grounds, parks, and schools will likely result in at least short term negative health impacts.

This advisory group would encourage appropriate regulatory bodies to provide a comprehensive analysis of the extent of the anticipated increases in air pollution. It will be essential to evaluate the unique roles that various factors including the community “micro-climate”, geography, traffic patterns, school locations, and public activity practices play in best understanding exposure levels and their likely associated health impacts.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Burton, M.D., M.P.H.

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