

DOCKET

07-AFC-8

DATE MAR 08 2009

RECD. MAR 09 2009

March 8, 2009

Dear Mr. Kessler and Mr. McKenzie,

I was pleased to find out that Ausra and URS considered my children when they implemented their traffic mitigation plan, and contacted the school district and found out current bussing routes for all children in the community. Although, I am still extremely disturbed about the wording they have used in their mitigation plan and would like to have some questions answered.

First, as you know school districts are dealing with a dire budget. School districts are cutting millions of dollars statewide; there is not one California School District that is not feeling this crisis. The budget has already affected Carrisa Plains Elementary School bus route- by only five minutes- but this is mid-year, who knows what will happen next year. The school district had to go through many channels to implement this change and is required to inform parents of this five minute delay. As a parent I am only informed of Ausra's plans to delay the traffic because I have opted to follow the process. I am concerned that many of the families in the area are low income (the school is the highest Title 1 School in the district) or they are second language families who can't follow the documents because none of the documents have been translated. The community has not been informed properly.

Which brings me to my next concern, the mitigation plan states no channel for the public to complain, if they do not comply with their traffic plan. The trucks will come from many different companies and I am concerned that they will not be able to abide by the proactive mitigation measures they have set forth. Who will a common citizen complain to? Where will a worried parent check on a traffic delay, when there is no communication service on many parts of highway 58? I don't understand how this will be controlled. I would like to also make you aware that the district has an open district policy- meaning that students are allowed to attend any school they wish within the district. Parents in this small community opt to have their students attend schools where the district can provide activities such as choir or band, or a program for their special needs of their children. The Carrisa Plains School is not able to provide such resources with its small numbers. The bus transports these elementary students. One family was court ordered for their child to ride the bus into town everyday upon the move to California Valley- the court stated that the child would still attend the current school in Atascadero. Without informing the community properly you are not allowing these parents to make informed decisions about their child's education, or the San Luis Obispo Courts.

I am going to go back to understanding the plan that Ausra has set forth. I read the plan and I do not understand the 9am-4pm delivery schedule, I admit I have no knowledge of traffic plans but I am an educated individual and I don't understand. Where on the route can they not travel between the hours of 9am-4pm. The route is 50 miles. For example: Route 58 east bound toward the site requires that the trucks travel through a small two way road through the town of Santa Margarita; where the only way to travel is directly through another school zone- that already has many traffic control problems. This

schedule will greatly impact students who are walking to school between the hours of 7:30-8:15am and 2:40-3:30pm. This is my children's previous school for 5 years and I have firsthand knowledge of the traffic problems in this area during school hours- you can be delayed by the train traffic directly in front of the school. A high volume crossing is the only way in/out of the school; it can be backed up along El Camino Real, another dangerous road for students. For a three month time period I worked as a crossing guard at this school and the traffic that travels from a highway to a small town is a potential hazard and on more than one occasion was grateful that I was there for the students crossing. Again, who is informing these parents of the traffic that is about to affect their children walking to and from school? I would like Ausra informed that this community is currently in a legal battle due to a subdivision that was approved by the county, and one of the reasons that the battle is taking place is the traffic concerns of the community. Ausra is coming into areas where families have moved so they do not have to worry about "city" traffic and it is only fair to inform communities properly.

Last, my biggest concern is the wording. Minimize means to reduce to the smallest amount. Who is going to be the deciding factor on minimize, maybe my smallest amount would be a reasonable 10 minute delay both ways, but maybe Ausra sees minimize as a 30 minute delay, resulting in an hour delay both ways. Who is the deciding factor on minimize? What is a "time sensitive" load? Why are these not identified in the mitigation plan, they should know what are considered "time sensitive" loads; if they are not identified, what is stopping them from saying all loads are "time sensitive" . To me the most "time sensitive" loads are human beings, and children are the most "time sensitive" . It should clearly be stated and the public should be informed when they are going to have a "time sensitive" load- if my child is going to be on a bus for a 3 hour bus trip with no bathroom or water, I want to plan on those "time sensitive" loads.

I understand that I am complaining to two different governments- the county and the state- and that is why I am informing the county of my concerns by addressing this letter to both of you as project managers. Traffic between the three projects must include cumulative impacts when it will affect three school zones (Carrisa Plains, Santa Margarita, and Creston Elementary) and their rural bussing routes. I am not positive- but I am guessing that traffic is part of the San Luis Obispo planning department's responsibility and when four different businesses want to build on a four way intersection, all businesses are seen as a cumulative impact, not each one separately.

I understand that all of this is temporary- and the plan states for only 6-month delivery windows broken down during a 36 month period- but again it is a 36 month period in the life of a high school student whose future depends on success/failure during those three years. Temporary or not, decision to live in area or not, traffic will be a problem on a two way highway. Change can be for the better, saving the environment is indispensable. Indispensable at the price of a few small communities, I guess is the answer. It seems logical to me, do not put industrial plants requiring such heavy traffic on a secluded two-way highway. California has many secluded areas where you have a direct off-ramp access. If Carrisa Plains is the only way to save the environment, let's require the companies to widen the highway before they build, and impact small communities for "only" three years.

Please understand it is my responsibility to protect my children and if any of these projects are approved it is crucial I have the proper information before putting my child on a bus daily and I know who to go to if I need to make a complaint so my children are protected. If either of you have children you will know what it feels like when someone you love is on route to a destination and they are late and you have no way to contact them about their whereabouts, please remember this as you make your decisions.

Thank you,

Jenny Cruz