November 04, 2022

DEQ OpenCut Mining Program  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901  
RE: OpenCut #3415  
deqopencut@mt.gov

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept our comments regarding the open cut mining proposal being considered in the Jocko Valley for a new concrete manufacturing plant. As members of the community for almost 25 years, we would like to offer our concerns in this matter on behalf of all of the visitors to this amazing valley. We wish only to be of service in our efforts to share the ways in which we see a plant of this kind affecting not only the Garden of One Thousand Buddhas, but the area at large.

The Garden of One Thousand Buddhas, founded in 2000, is a spiritual site located just 1/2 mile from the proposed mining site on White Coyote Road. Our Buddhist meditation center and place of peace, promotes joy, wisdom, compassion, and non-violence by offering a quiet, contemplative environment for visitors to come and take in the scenery of this beautiful valley. Throughout the year, thousands of religious and non-secular pilgrims travel to take teachings both in group and in solitude. They come for rest, to volunteer, and to learn about meditation, and healthy contemplation at this center of peace. For two decades, we have gathered with our sisters and brothers from the Salish-Kootenai tribe, to celebrate peace all together at our annual fall festival.

A quiet, calm, peaceful environment is the most essential part of having this center for peace here in the Jocko Valley. Between the truck traffic, noise from the breaking of rocks, and constant vibration from the mining practices that will be the daily norm at the proposed gravel mine & asphalt plant, students and visitors alike...
will find it impossible to practice, rest, relax, and take teachings without disruption. The air borne contaminants will cause even more respiratory illness for the elderly and frail students that would previously have been able to visit hoping to breathe in the fresh, country air. The noise pollution will hinder healing for those that have come from traumatized environments, such as veterans of war, and refugees fleeing from violent countries. Therefore, the proposed gravel pit threatens the very existence of the Garden of One Thousand Buddhas. It is indispensable to have a calm, serene environment according to our beliefs, as well as from instructions contained in our holy scriptures.

Please hear our heartfelt and truthful plea. Please do not allow the proposed concrete site to be placed in one of the most pristine, healthy, beautiful valleys left in the world. We implore you, for the sake of our center, the thousands of travelers we host, and the many other thousands of people throughout the area that will be negatively impacted by the erection of the proposed concrete plant. We would be grateful to discuss this further with your team before you make a final decision on the matter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

President
Khenpo N Namchak
Ewam Garden of One Thousand Buddhas