

**ATTN: TOM NIEMANN – TIMED RESPONSE**

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Snohomish County Department of Planning &  
Development Services

3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 604  
Everett, WA 98201-4064

Attn: Mr. Tom Niemann, Principal Planner



RE: RESPONSE TO DRAFT EIS MINERAL COMP PLAN

Dear Mr. Niemann,

A euphemism used for those drawing their income from employment by the government is that they are “public servants”. Your meeting of January 15, 2002 was to inform citizens and provide a forum for comments and input. I attended it. What input is actually received remains to be seen.

Your alternatives 1, 2 and 4 are irresponsible. The only reasonable alternative is #3, the so-called “Balanced Approach”. Exceptions should be noted. #1 is incorporated into #3. It states that it “evaluates” several factors, but in fact anticipates ignoring economic costs. How do you “evaluate” an economic decision (to sell something) without consideration of the costs? It also “...assumes that other environmental impacts would be addressed on a site-by-site basis.” It does not say when or by whom, and again ignores all considerations of economic costs.

This meeting disclosed that no one in the process admits to the responsibility to quantify the costs to the citizens relating to the extracting of mineral resources, as opposed to the dollars to be gained by selling them. It is difficult to understand “public servants” allowing such considerations to proceed with this obvious deficiency involved in quantifying the prospective dollar benefits to be gained and ignoring the costs involved. The only answer offered to me was, “That’s not my job.” Whose job is it? Why is it not being done? How can a “public servant” serve responsibly, ethically or effectively by quantifying revenue without regard to expenses? Such disregard for the obvious should be severely criticized in any operation, public or private.

Just in case I am not clear, please quantify the following costs to the citizens you “serve” in U.S. dollars (just like you do for prospective revenues) as part of the process in arriving at any decision to sell our resources:

- **Reduction in property values** of citizen’s real properties near the site and transportation corridor due to the mining activities.
- **Reduction in property tax revenues** from those properties due to their decrease in values.
- **Costs associated with roadway improvements required** due to transport of the material removed.
- **Costs associated with roadway damage** caused by heavy truck use to roadways.
- **Cost associated with the very large resulting use of water resources** in the process of removing the minerals, water resources we are continually being told are valuable and scarce, that we should conserve.
- **Costs associated with pollution of underground water resources** by the operation of heavy machinery in the recharge areas of the underground water aquifers, polluting the well water for citizens in the area.

Immediate and potential / probable impacts on such factors as:

- Streams and rivers.
- Wet lands.
- Run-off of surface water.
- Silt generated by the operations entering the ground water aquifers and area streams and rivers.
- Endangered birds, animals and fish.

- Destabilization of steep hillsides adjacent to excavations, along rivers.
- Removal of recreational lands from use (by the citizens you serve.)
- Again, water resource

Please consider the impact **now**, at the beginning, of the development of ALL of the resources targeted to **EVENTUALLY** be made available for extraction. Considered one at a time, each project can be viewed as having substantially less impact than the "big picture". But the "big picture" is where we will eventually find ourselves. Your job in "planning" should be to address exactly this consideration – the "big picture", long term. Otherwise, you really have no function other than to rubber-stamp the special interests of the special vested interest foreign corporations and other officials with "tunnel vision". To consider each prospective project one at a time is the same as warming up the pot that the proverbial frog is in, one degree at a time, until it is so hot he can no longer jump out. That dilemma is exactly what the "planning" process is supposed to avoid. Considering these projects one site (or degree of heat) at a time is not responsible planning.

For our "servants" to comply with only the minimum requirements in an issue this far-reaching is irresponsible. It might reasonably be described as a blatant sell-out to special interests. Please be sure that these factors are considered at the preliminary level. Now. No one further down the line will have any interest in them other than to see how easily they can be set aside. As a "public servant", I sincerely hope that is not your motivation.

An example you considering these factors up-front is the fact that all of southwestern Snohomish County is not even being quantified regarding mineral resources. The reason expressed by you and your staff, quite honestly I believe, is that the costs associated with extraction of such resources would be excessive, due to the relatively dense population in the area. Other citizens in Snohomish County should have the same consideration as has obviously been extended to those citizens in the southwestern sector.

These concepts are very simple, basic and essential:

- Equal treatment of the citizens while considering projects.
- Consideration of the costs associated with a project as an offset to the revenues to be gained.

Ignoring either is irresponsible. To defer either to a later time, to be done by foreign corporations with vested interests, is irresponsible. It is betrayal of the citizens "served". We support our government and expect our government be organized, and to support us. Do not pass us off to foreign, well-organized, well financed, special interests whose intent is to obtain our resources with apparent disregard for impacts to the citizens.

Frequently, there is no consideration of the performance by the industry elsewhere, but their track record **IS** relevant. Such firms have agreed to keep excavations from public view, and then ignored their commitment. Companies have excavated into water aquifers depleting the water supplies that many depended on for their existence, then fought the injured in court at great cost to the injured economically and emotionally, before providing minimal compensation. The attitude of these firms seems to be aggressive, arrogant, and quantified perhaps by the expression, "Get out of the way or get hurt." They are professional fighters. We do not want to fight them. We will if we must, but we do not want to. We want our "public servants" to do their jobs responsibly and ethically, and consider all the obvious economic and philosophical factors, before reaching conclusions about selling our resources. Then we citizens would not have to play "catch-up" while fighting the pros.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter. Obviously, I would also appreciate your commitment to genuinely consider these issues. Thank you for what I hope is your honest and unbiased consideration.

Sincerely,  
Joseph G. Downs