



September 5, 2012

Ms. Anne Hurlburt
City Administrator
City of Scandia
14727 209th Street
Scandia, MN 55073

**Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement - Traffic Analysis
for Zavoral Mining Project
RLK Incorporated Project No. 2011-163-M**

Dear Ms. Hurlburt:

RLK Incorporated has been hired by the Take-Action Conserve Our Scandia group to review the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), of the Zavoral Mining project. RLK focused specifically on Question 21 of the FEIS, and the answers to the questions that were raised during the review of the DEIS.

RLK is disappointed that the following comment didn't result in the desired outcome, "RLK finds the report devoid of the technical analysis needed to evaluate the traffic operations and safety of the project." We recognize that the FEIS has attempted to answer the questions that were raised as part of the previous review, but the lack of technical material makes it impossible to independently confirm whether the issues have been properly addressed. In particular:

1. On page 51 of the FEIS Response to Comments, the response to comments regarding peak hour turning movement counts at critical intersections, states, "Traffic counts were collected during the morning and evening rush hour on Tuesday, June 12th." There is no proof that these counts ever took place, they are not available in a technical appendix, nor, are there figures showing that they occurred only the statement above. Please produce these counts so that they can be independently verified.
2. Also, on page 51 of the FEIS Response to Comments, the response to the comment regarding LOS analysis states, "A LOS analysis was completed for four scenarios at the TH 97 and TH 95 intersection." Where can we find the analysis? There is no technical appendix containing the setup and results of the analysis. Please provide this information so that the results of the analysis can be verified.
3. On pages 52 and 53 of the FEIS Response to Comments, the response to the comment regarding lack of actual sight distance measurement states, "The sight distance was reviewed as part of the MnDOT evaluation of the proposed intersection plans submitted by Tiller. MnDOT determined the sight distance met their design criteria. A check of topography on TH 97 and TH 95 verified these conclusions." We asked specifically that the actual sight distance number be provided. It is not the responsibility of the concerned members of Take-Action Conserve Our Scandia group to

go out and measure this. Your response that it is adequate and MnDOT says so does not fill us with confidence. Please provide this information in feet illustrated on a plan sheet so that it can be independently verified.

In addition to the three items listed above, RLK finds the response is missing to the following comments:

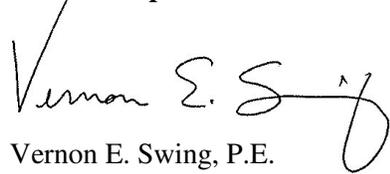
- It is unclear whether the ADT information provided has been adjusted to reflect seasonal fluctuations (i.e., recreational traffic on the scenic byway, etc.), and whether this adjusted traffic will be impacted by the hauling operations.
- There is no discussion of the structural capacity of the roadways and their ability to handle the increase in daily truck trips. The DEIS must provide an assessment of the existing and future pavement condition.
- Mitigation is summarized in the DEIS, yet there is no quantitative discussion of the impacts and changes to the operations or safety of the roadway network associated with the proposed mitigation strategies. These mitigation measures should also be quantified and prioritized.

It is RLK's opinion, the traffic information provided in response to Question 21 of the FEIS does not address the traffic impacts as required by the EIS process. In order to fully understand the traffic impacts associated with the Zavoral mining operation, the above mentioned issues (at a minimum) need to be addressed in a technical manner. Without the actual traffic counts and capacity analysis, the City is unable to assess the impacts to traffic operations and congestion, nor the impacts to the seasonal tourist traffic. Without a gap analysis the City is unable to assess whether the proposed access intersections provide the appropriate safety improvements to allow for seamless integration of site generated traffic. The presented material in the FEIS for Question 21 and Response to Comments is incomplete and prevents any opportunity to evaluate the traffic impact of the Zavoral Mining operation. In essence, the City must just take Tiller's word for it, traffic is not an issue. Developing the mine without appropriate traffic analysis, as we recommend, could result in significant safety issues to Scandia and the surrounding communities, including the increase risk for severe or fatal collisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this information.

Sincerely,

RLK Incorporated



Vernon E. Swing, P.E.

Principal Traffic Engineer

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