



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

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STOCKTON-LODI-TRACY AREA CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL -- ADEQUATE IN THE SHORT TERM, BUT POTENTIAL SHORTFALL LOOMS

SACRAMENTO – Construction aggregate – sand and gravel – is critical to building roads and other infrastructure. Mining operators have permits that will allow them to meet the aggregate needs of the Stockton-Lodi-Tracy area through 2033, according to a new California Geological Survey (CGS) report. However, since CGS last assessed the region's needs in 1988, the projected 50-year demand for the material has more than doubled, meaning shortages could be on the horizon that will impact construction costs.

“This is a part of the state that has seen a noteworthy amount of urbanization since our last review of the region 24 years ago, and thus a need for large amounts of construction-grade sand and gravel,” said Dr. John Parrish, State Geologist of California and head of CGS. “While it's true that construction has slowed significantly in the current economic climate, our report is a 50-year projection and takes into account the inevitable fluctuations of the economy.”

The CGS Mineral Resources Program divides the state into Production-Consumption Regions for the purpose of determining the demand for and supply of portland cement concrete-grade aggregate. The Stockton-Lodi Production-Consumption Region – centered on those two communities as well as Manteca and Tracy – covers about 412 square miles in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

According to the updated report, the projected 50-year demand for all grades of construction aggregate in the region is 687 million tons. By comparison, in 1988, the 50-year projection was 281 million tons for all grades of material.

“That's a significant difference that must be addressed,” Parrish said. “When you consider all the cement that's used in the modern environment, you understand how important it is to have a reliable supply of this basic construction material. Sand and gravel isn't as glamorous as gold, but in a certain sense, they are more valuable to California's economy.”

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act requires CGS to produce Mineral Land Classification studies in response to the threatened loss of significant mineral resources due to urban expansion and the need for

current information about the location and quantity of essential mineral resources.

“The goal is to ensure that the land containing these important mineral resources doesn’t become inaccessible because of a lack of information when land-use decisions are made,” said John Clinkenbeard, head of CGS’ Minerals Resource Program. “To be clear, there is plenty of sand and gravel available to be mined, but whether the mining of those resources will be permitted is a local decision. Construction-grade aggregate materials can be imported, but it’s an extremely bulky commodity and tends to be much less expensive when produced and consumed locally because of shipping costs.”

Construction grade sand and gravel is California’s leading industrial mineral commodity. In 2010, the state’s mines produced 82 million tons of the material, with an estimated total value of \$809 million.

CGS is part of the California Department of Conservation (DOC). In addition to categorizing mineral resources, DOC studies and maps geologic phenomena such as earthquakes; administers agricultural and open-space land conservation programs; ensures the reclamation of land used for mining; and regulates oil, gas and geothermal wells. For more information, visit <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/Index/Pages/Index.aspx>.

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