



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

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Some Parts of State Face Shortfall of Permitted Building Material

California Geological Survey Issues Updated Report, Map of Aggregate Availability

The report and map are available at <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/minerals/mlc/Pages/Index.aspx>

SACRAMENTO – Most areas of California do not have enough permitted aggregate reserves to cover their anticipated 50-year demand, a new California Geological Survey (CGS) report states. To meet the demands of future construction, a number of California communities will have to either permit new mines locally or import material, and a few are a decade or less away from facing shortages.

“Sand, gravel and crushed stone – collectively known as aggregate material -- are essential to the creation of the concrete and blacktop used to construct buildings and roads,” said Dr. John Parrish, California’s State Geologist and head of CGS. “So while aggregate isn’t as glamorous as gold, it’s literally one of the cornerstones of modern society and important to the state’s economy. To be clear, there is ample aggregate in the ground. The purpose of this report is to give local decision-makers a snapshot of where they stand with respect to nearby unpermitted sources of building material compared to their permitted reserves that are ready for extraction, and compare both to the anticipated future needs of their communities.”

Having a nearby supply of aggregate resources is important to growing communities for both economic and environmental reasons. The report states: *Transporting aggregate from distant sources results in increased construction costs, fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, traffic congestion, and road maintenance.*

This is an update of CGS’ 2006 aggregate sustainability report. Included are 31 aggregate study areas – known as production-consumption regions – that cover about 30 percent of California and provide aggregate for about 85 percent of the state’s population. The report is based on conditions as of January 1, 2011; thus, it does not reflect changes in production, mine closures or new or expanded permits since that time.

According to the report, the areas with the greatest projected future needs for aggregate are South San Francisco Bay, Temescal Valley-Orange County, and Western San Diego County. Each is expected to require

more than a billion tons of aggregate by the end of 2060. Other areas with projected high demands are San Gabriel Valley, and San Bernardino. Each of these areas is projected to need more than 800 million tons of aggregate in the next 50 years.

Compared to the 2006 report, most of the 31 study areas show decreases in projected 50-year demand. This is due in large part to the new population projections used in forecasting. The new county population projections are based on the 2010 U.S. census and project less population growth for much of California over the next 50 years compared to the projections used in previous versions of this study.

Even with the lower aggregate demand projections, the 31 study areas discussed in the report will need about 12 billion tons of construction aggregate in the next 50 years. Currently only 4 billion tons of reserves are permitted. So even with the somewhat lower demand projections in this update, two-thirds of the future demand remains unpermitted.

“The bottom line is, while we may need less building material than we anticipated a few years ago, we still need lots of it,” said CGS Supervising Geologist John Clinkenbeard, author of the study. “And there are parts of the state where they’re going to have to find new sources fairly soon.”

Comparing projected demand to currently permitted reserves for the 31 regions, only the Placer County region has 100 percent of the permitted reserves necessary to meet its anticipated 50-year aggregate demand, while the Yuba City-Marysville and Monterey Bay regions have at least 90 percent. Of the 31 regions, 19 have 50 percent or less of their anticipated aggregate need permitted.

Four of the 31 aggregate study areas – Western San Diego County, Sacramento County, Fresno County, and the San Fernando Valley-Saugus Newhall area – are projected to have less than 10 years of permitted aggregate reserves remaining as of January 1, 2011.

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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