

How to Write a SEPA Comment Letter to King County

Determination of Significance (DS) and Environmental Impact State (EIS) Scoping Phase (Updated 7/7/2026)

Preparation

- Become familiar with the project by reading the information on the King County website.
 - <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/local-services/buildings-property/public-notices-permit-records-search/special-interest-projects> or linked on resources page of DefendCumberland.com
 - Scroll to **project number: GRDE23-0083** for Cumberland Aggregate Mine and Asphalt Plant documents
 - Read the Determination of Significance and the Draft EIS scope.
- There is a **30-day comment period running from 7/8/26 – 8/7/26**.
- The County will release the Determination of Significance and the EIS scope for comment on 7/8/26.
- Follow @defendcumberland on Facebook and join our email list to be notified when the DS and EIS scope letter is released, where to find a copy of the letter, and timeline for the comment period.

Definitions

- Determination of Significance (DS): The County has determined that the impacts from this proposed project are significant and the applicant must conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The DS portion of the letter will describe the impacts that the County believes are significant. If you do not agree with the impacts listed, please include what impacts you do care about in your comment letter.
- Environmental Impact Statement Scope: This portion of the letter will describe what the scope/content of the EIS will be and allows the public to comment. The regulations require that the EIS must study and evaluate impacts, mitigation strategies, cumulative impacts and unmitigable impacts. If you do not agree with the impacts, mitigation strategies and studies, please include what impacts and studies you want in your comment letter.

If you are unsure about what to comment on, check out our template letter on DefendCumberland.com.
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Steps for Writing a Comment Letter

1. Read the DS/EIS Scoping letter from King County to understand what impacts that the County believes are significant are being proposed.
2. Send public comment letters during the 30-day comment period.
3. Email format:
 - a. To: ty.peterson@kingcounty.gov; asklocalservices@kingcounty.gov
 - b. CC: DefendCumberland@gmail.com; reagan.dunn@kingcounty.gov
 - c. Subject: Public Comment on DS/EIS Scoping for Project Number: GRDE23-0083
4. Tips to make your comment letter more effective:
 - a. Show support for a comprehensive, accurate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
 - b. Write about the individual, cumulative, and mitigatable impacts and impacts that cannot be mitigated with regards to the community and the environment.
 - c. Use your own voice and experience.
 - i. Describe how the project may affect water, roads, safety, public health, air, recreation or wildlife.
 - ii. Confirm or challenge details in the County's DS/EIS Scoping letter using your observations.
 - d. Be factual, use specific examples, cite locations, describe personal observations and include photos/images.
 - e. Focus on how the project affects you and your community and environment.
 - f. You don't need technical expertise—your lived experience matters.

- g. Ask to be added as a party of record and to receive notifications regarding upcoming SEPA document releases and public meetings related to this project.

Common Anticipated Concerns Shared by the Community

Use this list as inspiration for topics to include in your letter.

Impact Category	Potential Impacts	Possible Studies
Water impacts	• Pollution in groundwater, aquifers, rivers, and streams • Contamination of private wells and springs • Reduced water availability and quality • Drinking water safety and equity • Increased landslide potential into the Green River	• Regional & onsite groundwater monitoring and modeling to evaluate fate and transport of chemicals between groundwater & surface water to understand chemistry changes in the water • Possible changes to drinking water wells (private and municipal) • Changes in groundwater flow and quantity to the Green River to evaluate impact on fish survival • Temperature changes in the Green River that could impact fish • Geotechnical evaluation of historic and projected landslide activity along the Green River Gorge
Wildlife and habitat	• Loss of habitat and food sources • Displacement of animals into residential areas • Impacts on fish (endangered salmon) and tribal fishing rights	• Document fish species that would be affected in the Green River and their habitat • Identify wildlife currently present on the site • Evaluate wildlife corridors that cross through and adjacent to the site, including grey wolf
Air quality	• Emissions from asphalt plant and trucks • Dust and wind-blown pollutants • Greenhouse gas emissions	• Studies need be based on local data collected onsite (not Mud Mountain Dam) for at least 2 years to capture the local variability of climate/weather • Evaluate the fate and transport of mine dust, toxics from the asphalt plant emissions, and air quality degradation
Noise	• Truck traffic on roadways, including braking & accelerating affecting nearby residences • Onsite operations noise: crushing, blasting, alarms • Increased industrial noise in recreation areas and adjacent State Park	• Characterize baseline (current noise levels) and future modeled noise levels during all seasons to determine increased noise level to the community • Modeling should include mining, equipment, transport and asphalt production

Traffic & safety	• Increased truck traffic • Accident potential for school buses, recreational vehicles, bicycles, & pedestrians • Degraded road and bridge conditions	• Characterize existing and future year-round traffic counts • Evaluate impact of haul routes in Enumclaw, Buckley, Maple Valley and Black Diamond • Modeling of future conditions should include Black Diamond and other city's population growth, season activities (State Parks, King County Fair, White River Amphitheater, bike races, and Rock Creek Sports Complex)
Fire risk	• Asphalt plant and forest fire hazards • Limited water and emergency services • Burning of stumps and wood debris	• Evaluate the capability and equipment of fire districts that would be called for wood and asphalt fires.
Recreation & land use	• Impacts on parks, hunting, fishing, and trails • Desire for public access to land • Concerns about future housing development	• Evaluate changes in noise, odor, & access on recreational land, State Park usage, hunting and fishing
Public health & safety	• Air and water pollution effects on human & animal health • Emergency services response limitations • Disturbance of historical mine	• Evaluate air & water pollution effects on human & animal health from the mining, asphalt plant, truck traffic, & historic mine disturbance