29 January 2026

**Via email to jpersons@utah.gov**

Director Bryce Bird

Utah Division of Air Quality

195 North 1950 West

P.O. Box 144820  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4820

Central Wasatch Commission

311 South State Street

Suite 330

Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

**Subject:**  Granite Construction Company proposed open-air gravel mine at

I-80 South Quarry in Salt Lake County, Utah

UDAQ Public Comment Period

Dear Utah Department of Air Quality,

The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) is an interlocal government entity whose Board includes mayors of municipalities and leaders of governmental service providers in and adjacent to the Central Wasatch Mountains. The CWC also hosts a 35-member advisory Stakeholders Council representing economic, environmental, recreation, transportation, and community interests. The CWC is guided by core tenets that include preserving and protecting the critical resources of the Central Wasatch.

Granite Construction Company’s (GCC) newly proposed open-air gravel mine, located within Parley’s Canyon, falls within the CWC’s area of interest. Parley’s Canyon, while also a bustling transit corridor, offers immense value to Central Wasatch communities through recreation, conservation, and economic opportunities. The member jurisdictions of the CWC, along with various stakeholders, are concerned about the potential negative impacts an open-air mine in the canyon would have on air quality, watersheds, visitor experience, natural beauty, and flora and fauna.

Fugitive dust emissions that originate from open-air mining have the potential to contaminate the Salt Lake Valley’s greater watershed, along with critical neighboring reservoirs. This potential contamination poses a considerable risk to the health, safety, and general welfare of the valley’s residents and water users. Risking damage to a fundamental public good like water is an irresponsible decision. Health concerns aside, the added demand for water at the mine will increase pressure on an already strained water system. Dust from the mine will inevitably be blown into the air as soil disruption occurs. This, in turn, can lead to increased dust-on-snow, which can expedite the melting process of the snowpack. This comes at a time when the Central Wasatch is experiencing shorter winter seasons, shrinking snowpacks, and a growing population that requires more and more water.

These communities already experience elevated levels of airborne pollutants due to inversions caused by the geography of the valley. The Salt Lake Valley is often recognized as having some of the worst air quality in the nation during the winter months. Mining emissions from diesel and dust will further decrease regional air quality by adding harmful particulates to an already polluted airshed.

While the impacts of emissions are felt downstream, there are also consequences that will be felt in the immediate area surrounding the proposed mine. Central to the Central Wasatch are vibrant mountain ecosystems that harbor native wildlife. Habitat destruction and disruption can push fauna out of their natural lands and toward population centers. Not only does this put pressure on the ecosystem itself, but it also threatens beloved recreation opportunities such as hunting and wildlife viewing.

The CWC’s guiding directive, chartered during the Mountain Accord process in 2015, is to pursue and pass federal legislation to establish the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (CWNCRA). The CWNCRA is a novel designation that would protect 80,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service land in the Central Wasatch Mountains. Hallmarks of the legislation include permanent protections for Parley’s, Millcreek, Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons; additional wilderness designations and watershed protections; and the creation of a watershed protection area, all while protecting private property rights and land holdings within the area. A proposed mine directly undermines this multi-year, multi-jurisdictional effort to protect and preserve these cherished mountains.

At a time when public lands are facing an onslaught of threats, it is critical to ensure strong protections for these mountains. They serve as community hubs and economic drivers for the state of Utah at large. With the recent rescission of the federal Roadless Rule, it is more important than ever to advocate for and demand protections for vulnerable public lands.

The CWC stands firm in its vehement opposition to an open-air mine in Parleys Canyon, whether through this permit application or those of the past. In 2022, the Board unanimously passed Resolution 2022-13 to voice opposition to the initial permit application for an open-air Parleys Canyon mine. Now, in 2026, a new and outstanding concern is H.B. 355, Mining and Critical Infrastructure Materials Amendments. This bill implies that once an operation acquires a permit to access critical infrastructure materials, it may expand onto any contiguous land for further development without reapplying. This effectively places the original, much larger permit area from 2022 back on the table for development. The CWC strongly opposes this subversion of the public permit process.

The CWC will continue to support policies that limit future mining activities in the Central Wasatch. Any proposed action in the Central Wasatch should consider all interconnected systems of the Wasatch, and reduce negative impacts on the communities that would experience a diminished quality of life.

Respectfully submitted,

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Erin Mendenhall, Salt Lake City Mayor, Central Wasatch Commission Chair

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Roger Bourke, Town of Alta Mayor, Central Wasatch Commission Co-Chair

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Christopher F. Robinson, Summit County Council Member

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Monica Zoltanski, Sandy City Mayor



Emily Gray, Holladay City Council Member

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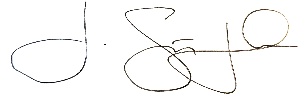
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Bill Ciraco, Park City Council Member



Gay Lynn Bennion, Cottonwood Heights Mayor





Scotty John, Town of Brighton Mayor

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*The Central Wasatch Commission (CWC) was created in 2017 by interlocal agreement and has since served as a convener for the jurisdictions, stakeholders, and public with interest and authority in the Central Wasatch Mountains. The CWC’s mission is to preserve the Central Wasatch through providing canyon transportation solutions, pathways for concentrated development, environmental protections, and recreational stewardship.*

*The Board of Commissioners is currently composed of elected leaders from Summit County, Park City, Salt Lake City, Millcreek, Cottonwood Heights, Sandy City, the City of Holladay, the Town of Brighton and the Town of Alta with the Utah Transit Authority, High Valley Transit, and Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy serving as ex-officio members, and with Solitude Mountain Resort and Save Our Canyons serving as Special Advisors to the Board, representing the economy system and the environment system of the Central Wasatch, respectively. The CWC’s 35-member Stakeholders Council is composed of representatives from the Cottonwood Canyon ski resorts, the environmental and recreational communities, private property owners, transportation advocates, and representatives from the educational and cultural communities of the Wasatch Front and Back. The varied composition of the Central Wasatch Commission reflects the varied nature of the issues in the Central Wasatch Mountains, and no other entity like the CWC that provides a forum of ideas exists elsewhere.*

*More information at* [*cwc.utah.gov*](https://d.docs.live.net/92035bd6e96ee99e/Desktop/Admin/Transportation/cwc.utah.gov)