

From: [Nance, Ivan](#)
To: [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: NO on LCDU-2025-29
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:15:43 PM

From: Ann Mullen <ann.c.mullen@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:10 PM

To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; Nance, Ivan <IvanNance@polkfl.gov>

Subject: NO on LCDU-2025-29

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Good afternoon, Commissioners,

I am writing to urge you to vote no on the proposed sand mine near Lake Wales.

Until three weeks ago, we owned a home in the Saddlebag Lake Resort. Since we can no longer make the long and taxing drive from upstate NY to FL, we (regrettably) had to sell it. Be that as it may, we are still passionately interested in the future of the resort and the surrounding area.

Our reasons for opposing the mine's application are:

- No comprehensive survey has been done yet to determine what endangered species will be impacted by this mine. The application promises a walk around OR survey AFTER the application is granted. Too late - as we all know, species are not confined by property lines, and we've seen many, many animal and plant species in Saddlebag resort.
- Route 60, no matter what the "official" reports say, cannot handle an additional 568 trips of heavy dump trucks per day. Route 60 is already too crowded since there is no other corridor south to Vero Beach.
- In the application, the applicants provided road widths that are not accurate. The roads are actually narrower than reported in the application.

Pity the poor children who have to wait for school buses on those narrow roads!

- The mine will be operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Think of the dust, noise, silica contamination.
- The applicants state that the area is sparsely settled with residential homes. That is a gross misstatement - there are almost 800 homes in Saddlebag and 1,300 residents, a majority of them full time or residents who stay six months, at least.
- The homes in the resort, and the other homes within the area of the sand mines will lose up to 30% of their value if this sand mine is permitted to get up and running. That is a drastic impact on at least 800 to 900 working and retired families.
- The conversion of farmland in Florida to commercial and residential use took **72,000 acres** of farm and ranch land in 2024 alone. Projections indicate that the state could lose roughly **2.2 million acres of agricultural land—nearly 19% of its current total—by 2070** if current sprawl trends continue (from Google AI). The beauty of Florida is its geographic diversity, and the many open areas. Don't let them disappear.

Thank you for listening. Please vote NO on March 17th.

Thank you,
Ann Mullen
179 Church Pond
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 9:43 AM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay; White, Margo
Subject: FW: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine, Case Number LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board



Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
District 4: 863.534.6422; **District 5:** 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: twopaws64 <twopaws64@frontier.com>
Sent: Monday, January 19, 2026 1:00 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine, Case Number LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

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Dear Chair Commissioner Santiago,

My wife and I are residents in the SaddleBag
Lake Resort, a 55+ retirement community in

Lake Wales. We are writing to state our firm opposition to the appeal of **Case #LDCU-2025-29**, the proposed Conditional Use Request for a mining borrow pit planned adjacent to our community.

After reviewing the details made available, there is a critical error in the application; SaddleBag Lake Resort is Residential, NOT “Leisure Recreation”. Saddlebag is now a 55 and up, manufactured home community comprised of 787 deeded lots and 13 parcels of land now owned by the Association and dedicated to common use amenities, administration and recreational buildings, sewer and water utilities, and unused space. Saddlebag is home to upwards of 1500 socially active seniors who have chosen this location to enjoy their remaining years of retirement life.

The application is factually incorrect; this project is incompatible with the surrounding residential areas and poses unacceptable risks to both the environment and the well-being of the community. This location is simply not appropriate for an industrial operation of this nature, and we urge the county to reject the proposal outright and ask that the county take immediate and decisive action to protect the interests of those who call this area home.

Primary Concerns of a large Non-Phosphate Mining operation adjacent to our community:

Air quality and respiratory issues

Sand mines and quarrying operations generate a significant amount of dust and other airborne particles, particularly fine crystalline silica. When inhaled, these can cause serious respiratory illnesses.

- **Respiratory illnesses:** Dust inhalation can lead to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis, and an increased prevalence of asthma and chronic cough.
- **Silicosis:** Fine silica dust can lead to silicosis, an incurable and sometimes fatal lung disease that causes scarring of the lungs.
- **Aggravated symptoms:** People living near quarry sites report more frequent eye and nasal allergies, as well as irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat.
- **Reduced lung function:** Studies have shown that people living close to quarry sites have significantly lower lung function compared to those who live farther away.

Water contamination

Sand mines can disrupt natural groundwater flow and potentially contaminate local water sources, which can have long-term health consequences for the community.

- **Groundwater pollution:** Chemicals, heavy metals, and sediment can leach from the pit into the groundwater, especially in areas with a shallow water table, affecting drinking water supplies.
- **Waterborne diseases:** If pits fill with stagnant water, they can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other vectors, increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases.

- **Surface water impacts:** Runoff and erosion can cause contamination of nearby streams and rivers, which can affect aquatic ecosystems and potentially impact the human food chain.

Noise pollution and related stress

The continuous and loud noise from excavation, blasting, and heavy machinery can be a serious public health concern for nearby residents.

- **Hearing problems:** While less severe than for mine workers, community residents exposed to constant, high-decibel noise may experience noise-induced hearing loss or tinnitus.
- **Cardiovascular issues:** Chronic noise exposure is linked to increased stress levels, sleep disturbances, and a higher risk of cardiovascular problems like hypertension.
- **Mental health effects:** The constant disturbance can cause irritability, anxiety, and general psychological strain.

Other potential health concerns

- **Traffic and safety hazards:** Increased heavy vehicle traffic to and from the sand mine can increase noise levels and the risk of accidents.
- **Soil contamination:** Pollutants can also affect the soil, potentially impacting agricultural crops grown in the area. Consuming contaminated produce can pose a health risk.
- **Direct exposure risks:** Accidental contact with or falling into the dredging ponds can present a physical safety hazard, especially for children.

Given the magnitude of these concerns, we strongly urge the county to deny approval for this project. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. We trust that the county will carefully consider the interests and well-being of its residents in making this decision.

Sincerely,

Thad & Ruth Schafer
Residents, Saddlebag Lake Resort

39 Queen of Waters

Lake Wales, Florida 33898

--

Thad Schafer
(269)569-0298
tspaws64@gmail.com

twopaws64@frontier.com

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 5:29 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: #LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board

Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
District 4: 863.534.6422; District 5: 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Shirley Weightman <slweigh@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 4:16 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: #LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

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Dear Ms Martha Santiago. In 1602 an island was discovered in the North Atlantic by Bartholemew Gosnold and was named Martha's Vineyard. Martha was his daughter and it had an abundance of wild grapes. Hence the name. Its population increases vastly with summer visitors. The residents and officials work very hard to maintain its historical atmosphere. You might wonder what this has to do with a sand mine in Lake Wales. Saddlebag Lake Resort was developed in 1973 starting out as a campground and evolving into what we have today with manufactured trailers, double wide park models etc. No longer a campground. We are nestled in amongst the orange groves on a beautiful lake called Saddlebag Lake. Did you know that Saddlebag lake is located smack in the middle of the largest number of lakes in

Florida. The resort population increases vastly in the winter time with “snowbirds” coming from far and wide. We bring many dollars to the coffers of not only the Polk County tax base but our support of local businesses. The residents also work very hard to maintain our historical heritage and have an extensive library on the subject. Not so much different than Martha’s Vineyard. We are as passionate about our little piece of paradise as the residents of Martha’s Vineyard. We don’t want it destroyed by an operating sand mine bordering our resort. We ask for your support in denying the appeal of the sand mine noted in the reference. Thank you very much. Robert and Shirley Weightman 2 Woodruff Way

Sent from my iPad

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 3:58 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: LDCU-2025-29

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board



Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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From: Laurie Hawkins-Belden <hawkinsbelden1111@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 1:37 PM
To: Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>
Subject: LDCU-2025-29

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1/13/26

Greetings,

I'm writing to you as a concerned resident of South Shore RV Resort, regarding the environmental impacts of a proposed sand mine development in our county.

I urge you to take into account the significant risks these activities pose to our area.

We ask that you deny this appeal. Our communities health, safety, & natural resources depend on you,

Thank you for your kind consideration in this important matter!

Respectfully,

Laurie Hawkins-Belden
7210 Windsong Dr.
Lake Wales, FL 33898

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 1:21 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay; White, Margo
Subject: FW: Saddlebag Lake Resident Opposition to Mammoth Grove Sand Mine (LDCU-2025-29) – Incompatible with PCCP Policies

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board



Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
District 4: 863.534.6422; **District 5:** 863.534.6049
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From: Mike Syrett <mdsyrett@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2026 10:52 AM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; Nance, Ivan <IvanNance@polkfl.gov>
Cc: Mike Syrett <mdsyrett@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Saddlebag Lake Resident Opposition to Mammoth Grove Sand Mine (LDCU-2025-29) – Incompatible with PCCP Policies

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District 1: Becky Troutman, Commissioner

(863) 534-6450, BeckyTroutman@polkfl.gov

District 2: Rick Wilson, Commissioner

(863) 534-6434, RickWilson@polkfl.gov

District 3: Bill Braswell, Vice Chair, Commissioner

(863) 534-6050, BillBraswell@polkfl.gov

District 4: Martha Santiago, Ed.D., Chair, Commissioner,

(863) 534-6422, MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov

District 5: Michael Scott, Commissioner

(863) 534-6049, MichaelScott@polkfl.gov

Planner in Charge: Ivan Nance

863-534-6449 IvanNance@polkfl.gov

I am writing as a Saddlebag Lake resident stating my firm opposition to the proposed Mammoth Grove Sand Mine, application LDCU-2025-29. This project is fundamentally incompatible with the surrounding community and conflicts with multiple policies of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan (PCCP). For these reasons, it should not be approved.

The area surrounding the proposed mine is an established residential and rural community where people live, raise families, and depend on the land and water for their daily lives. Residents did not choose to live next to an industrial mining operation. Approving this sand mine would impose an incompatible industrial use on the Saddlebag Resort community, in direct conflict with the PCCP's land use compatibility policies that require development to be compatible with surrounding land uses and protect existing neighborhood's from adverse impacts.

The PCCP emphasizes the protection of established residential and rural areas from uses that generate excessive noise, dust, vibration, traffic, and environmental disruption. Sand mining is an intensive industrial activity involving heavy equipment, excavation, dewatering, and continuous truck traffic over many years. These impacts are unavoidable and cannot be meaningfully mitigated. As such, the proposed mine is inconsistent with PCCP policies requiring that conditional uses not adversely affect the health, safety, and welfare of nearby residents.

Residents would be subjected to constant noise, airborne dust, and vibration extending beyond the mine site. These impacts interfere with the basic ability to safely and peacefully enjoy one's home and property. The PCCP specifically calls for land use decisions that protect quality of life and prevent incompatible uses from degrading residential living conditions. This proposal fails to meet that standard.

The proposed mine also conflicts with PCCP policies related to environmental protection and water resources. The Lake Wales Ridge area is environmentally sensitive and heavily dependent on groundwater. The Comprehensive Plan prioritizes protection of aquifers, surface waters, wetlands, and areas prone to sinkhole formation. Mining and dewatering activities increase the risk of groundwater drawdown, sinkholes, and degradation of nearby lakes and wetlands—placing residents' wells, homes, and long-term water security at risk.

Additionally, the PCCP includes transportation and public safety policies requiring that development not overburden roadways or create unsafe conditions for existing users. The heavy truck traffic generated by the proposed mine is incompatible with local roads currently used by residents, school buses, and agricultural vehicles. Increased truck traffic will elevate safety risks, noise, air pollution, and roadway deterioration, all in direct conflict with Comprehensive Plan goals for safe and efficient transportation systems.

Conditional uses are intended to be approved only when they align with the Comprehensive Plan and are compatible with surrounding land uses. The Mammoth Grove Sand Mine does not meet these requirements. Approval of LDCU-2025-29 would undermine the PCCP, disregard land-use compatibility standards, and set a dangerous precedent for placing industrial mining operations in residential and rural communities.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Polk County Land Commission to deny the proposed Mammoth Grove Sand Mine application. Upholding the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and protecting residents, water resources, and community character must take precedence over incompatible industrial development.

Sincerely,

Michael D Syrett
98 Silversides, Saddlebag Resort

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 4:11 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Received on behalf of the Board.

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board

Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
District 4: 863.534.6422; District 5: 863.534.6049
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-----Original Message-----

From: Alana Payne <alanapayne1960@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 4:00 PM
To: Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

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>>>> Dear Commissioner Wilson & Polk County Planning Commissioners,
>>>>

>>>> I strongly oppose the appeal of LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine. This use is not compatible with an adjacent 55+ community.

>>>>

>>>> The approval of the Mammoth Grove Mine would have disastrous implications on Saddlebag Lake Resort, a residential community of nearly 800 households that has been a thriving part of East Polk County since its grand opening in 1973.

>>>>

>>>> The Polk County Development Review Committee claims the request is compatible with the surrounding area that is very sparse. Really? Nearly 800 households that have existed and paid county taxes for over 50 years is considered sparse? Did anyone from the Development Review Committee do a site inspection? Apparently not or they would have seen an active adult retirement community with residents enjoying an exceptional quality of life that's a legacy of previous Saddlebaggers for 50+ years. This isn't something to cast aside because of a request for a borrow pit that offers nothing but negatives in every aspect of its existence.

>>>>

>>>> A quick Google search of open pit mining is a litany of woes; noise, air pollution contributing to respiratory problems, water pollution and water table depletion, negative affect on the environment and endangered species, an astonishing amount of increased heavy truck traffic on Highway 60 in the amount of a daily average of 1,072 would obviously increase traffic accidents, and all of these factors would certainly lower home values in Saddlebag Lake Resort. Is this abundance of negative components of open pit mining contributing to a diminished quality of life for senior citizens so insignificant to Dick Crockett, the applicant, and to Polk County Commissioners?

>>>>

>>>> Opposition to the Mammoth Grove Mine isn't an example of "not in my backyard." In 2005, Saddlebag residents came to a Polk County Commission meeting to support the zoning change that would have allowed residential development on our northern perimeter by the Berry Corporation. Last year, we were sad to see the orange groves on our western perimeter bulldozed down and burned but accept the reasons for change. And, we know residential development is inevitable on that same western border and probably won't be opposed. But a sand mining operation bringing a multitude of problems is not compatible with a 55+ residential community recently celebrating its 50th anniversary as a part of Polk County.

>>>>

>>>> Considering our community demographic is retired senior adults seeking the quiet enjoyment of a healthy, safe environment, I ask the applicant, Dick Crockett, and all Polk County Commissioners the following question? Would you want your parents or grandparents retirement lives to be adversely impacted by the addition of an open pit sand mining operation? Of course you wouldn't. A sand mining pit next to nearly 800 homes in a long established senior retirement community is not compatible so a decision to deny this request is not really that difficult.

>>>>

>>>> Please, I urge the Polk County Commission to deny the request for appeal of LDCU-2025-29 that allows the Mammoth Grove Mine adjacent to Saddlebag Lake Resort.

>>>>

>>>> Freda Ward, Bruce Ward, Alana Payne-Ward

>>>> 21 Saddlebag Lake Road North, Saddlebag Lake Resort Sent from my

>>>> iPhone

>>>>

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 4:10 PM
To: Yannone, Lyndsay; White, Margo
Subject: FW: News Release Urgent

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Good afternoon,

Received on behalf of the Board.

I am not certain this email constitutes as formal opposition to the case; I am sharing just in case.

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board



Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005

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From: Cheryl Brannan <Cybrannan1@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 3:51 PM
To: Cheryl Brannan <cybrannan1@outlook.com>
Subject: News Release Urgent

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News Release

Release Date: January 13, 2025

Contact: Cheryl Brannan

LAKE WALES RESIDENTS LAUNCH WEBSITE, VIDEO OPPOSING MAMMOTH GROVE SAND MINE
Residents say health, safety and environmental risks are grave

Lake Wales, FL—An ad-hoc group of Lake Wales residents named nosandmine.org wants people in and around the Lake Wales community to know their concerns about the health, traffic safety and environmental risks that accompany the proposed Mammoth Grove mining operation, which is up for a vote before the Polk County Commission sometime in the weeks ahead.

“Everything about this mine is incompatible with the land use around it,” said Cheryl Brannan, a long-time Lake Wales resident involved with the effort. “It would be terrible to impose health and environmental issues like this on the members of this community.”

To help spread the word, nosandmine.org has developed a dedicated Facebook page containing information about the risks imposed on residents by the proposed mine. Included at the site are an informational [video](#), FAQ, contact information and other materials who want to learn more about the issue and make their voices heard.

The Mammoth Grove proposal was soundly defeated in a 6-1 vote before the Polk County Planning Commission in early December, a decision the developers have appealed. The County Commission is tentatively slated to hear the appeal in March.

For more information, visit nosandmine.org

XXX

Contact: Cheryl Brannan
nosandminelakewales@gmail.com

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 5:31 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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From: Lucy Lucy <lucy_lucy3@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, January 9, 2026 3:52 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Fw: LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

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January 09, 2026

Re: Opposition to LDCU-2025-29 Appeal

Email transmittal MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov

To Martha Santiago, Chair District 4 Planning Commissioner ,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the LDCU-2025-29 sand mining operation currently under review for approval by Polk County Commissioners.

I am a retired National Construction Safety Officer and a property owner in Saddlebag Resort, which is directly adjacent to the proposed sand mining site. Based on my professional experience and a substantial body of scientific evidence, I am deeply concerned about the potential health and environmental risks associated with sand mining operations in close proximity to residential communities.

Sand mining and quarrying operations are operationally similar and present comparable health hazards, particularly related to airborne particulate matter and respirable crystalline silica (RCS). Numerous studies have demonstrated that such activities pose significant risks to nearby populations.

A peer-reviewed study conducted by Maysaa Nemer, Rita Giacaman, and Abdullatif Hussein of the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University examined the health effects of dust exposure on populations living near quarry sites. Their cross-sectional comparative study, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (August 20, 2020), evaluated 79 individuals living within 500 meters of quarry sites and compared them to 79 individuals living farther away.

The study concluded that environmental exposure to dust from quarrying activities poses clear health dangers to nearby residents. Individuals living in close proximity, reported significantly higher exposure to dust at home (98%), land degradation (85%), dust-covered vegetation (97%), and inability to grow crops (92%). Reported health effects were substantially greater among the exposed group, including higher rates of eye and nasal allergies, eye soreness and dryness, chest tightness, and chronic cough. Objective lung function testing further demonstrated significantly reduced forced vital capacity (FVC) and forced expiratory volume (FEV1) among exposed individuals, with worsening outcomes correlated to closer residential proximity to quarry sites.

While this study was conducted in Palestine, its findings are directly applicable and should not be dismissed. The extraction processes, equipment, and airborne dust generation associated with quarrying and sand mining are substantially similar. Both represent surface extraction operations for construction materials and generate comparable environmental and public health impacts, particularly when located adjacent to zoned residential properties.

In addition, I urge the Council to consider the growing body of evidence regarding public and occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS). Recent government reviews and newly published Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) regulations underscore the seriousness of these hazards. RCS is a well-documented respiratory hazard, and its widespread presence necessitates stringent control strategies.

It is notable that it has taken more than five decades to fully recognize the severe health consequences of RCS exposure. Over time, permissible exposure limits (PEL) and time-weighted averages (TWA) have been significantly reduced in response to mounting evidence of harm. Despite this, I was unable to locate studies conducted in the USA addressing RCS exposure among residential populations near sand mining operations. If worker safety has historically been compromised, it raises serious concerns regarding the extent of exposure experienced by nearby residents.

A comprehensive study titled Occupational Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica Among U.S. Metal and Nonmetal Miners, 2000–2019, published in January 2023 by Misra et al., analyzed MSHA data over a 19-year period. The study found that the overall 95th percentile of RCS exposure was 148.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ —well above recommended exposure limits—indicating a persistent and substantial risk of silica-related respiratory disease.

For context, in 1974 the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established a recommended exposure limit (REL) of 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as a time-weighted average. MSHA later adopted a permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Recognizing ongoing risks, MSHA proposed a new silica rule on June 30, 2023, lowering the PEL to 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and requiring enhanced engineering controls, exposure monitoring, and medical surveillance across all mining operations.

Given the documented health risks, evolving regulatory standards, and the close proximity, of the proposed sand mine to established residential properties, I strongly urge the Council to deny approval of the LDU29 sand mining operation or, at minimum, require comprehensive independent environmental and public health impact assessments prior to any consideration of approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these serious concerns.

REF:

1. Lung Function and Respiratory Health of Populations Living Close to Quarry Sites in Palestine: A Cross-Sectional Study <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7504702/pdf/ijerph-17-06068.pdf>
2. Occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica among US metal and nonmetal miners, 2000–2019 Shilpi Misra MPH, Aaron L. Sussell PhD, First published: 27 January 2023 <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.23451>

Respectfully submitted,

Michael D Syrett

96 Silversides Rd., Lake Wales, Saddlebag Resort

FL 33898

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 8:09 AM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Saving Saddlebag Lake Resort

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

Please Note: Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from state and local officials regarding state or local business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

From: JANET BUXTON <gnjbuxton@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 6:49 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Saving Saddlebag Lake Resort

You don't often get email from gnjbuxton@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Polk County BoCC Email System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Martha,
You have heard our concerns: Please help us save our community of good people who want to keep their lovely little homes. I beg of you!

Thank you,
Janet Buxton
812 430 3666

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:45 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Concerns regarding Highlands Club Development

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: Hope Garcia <hopeg14@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 1:37 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Concerns regarding Highlands Club Development

You don't often get email from hopeg14@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Polk County BoCC Email System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Commissioners,

As a resident of Polk County, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed high-density development known as Highlands Club, located at Crews Lake Drive and Yarborough Road, in anticipation of the upcoming County Commission Meeting scheduled for January 6th.

The proposed density does not align with the established character of our community. The transition from one-acre lots to 6,000 sq. ft. lots is not a transition—it's an overwhelming shift that threatens our local infrastructure, school capacity, and road safety.

I respectfully request that the Commission deny the Highlands Club proposal as submitted.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our community.

Hope Garcia

Email: hopeg14@gmail.com

Mobile: (610) 428-2128

From: [Troutman, Becky](#)
To: [White, Margo](#); [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: Sand mining
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026 12:01:49 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: JUDY LONG <gogators01@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 11:53 AM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Sand mining

[You don't often get email from gogators01@msn.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Polk County BoCC Email System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Becky

I am a 3rd generation of Polk County.

Born and raised in Lakeland and work in Lake Wales.

PLEASE vote NO on this sand mining.

My co worker lives in Saddlebag and it is very close to where she lives. This sand mining will cause health issues for all of us. Bok Tower is close by, it will affect them and our beautiful wildlife that Polk has. More traffic on Highway 60, more trucks. There was an accident yesterday that killed 4 people. Do you want more of that? I would hope not.

Another issue that I have is Stop Overdeveloping Florida/Polk County. I am sick and tired of farm land, orange groves being torn down for cheap houses and being sold for \$\$\$\$\$. I don't understand how DR Horton, Lennar and many others get away with these cheap homes. I watch DR Horton homes go up. The foundation is laid and blocks go within two days. I have walked through these homes, seen cracks in the foundation and blocks. The kitchen cabinets are cheap. These apartments being built are not going to stand a very strong hurricane.

Please vote NO on sand mining and do something about the overdeveloping in Polk County.

I did vote for you but if you vote for sand mining I will not vote for you again.

Thank you

Judy Long
Sent from my iPhone

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:51 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Mammoth Grove Sand Mine

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
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From: Tammy Kuski <tammykuski@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:22 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Mammoth Grove Sand Mine

You don't often get email from tammykuski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To the Polk County Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Mammoth Grove Sand Mine. My home is located at South Shore Resort on Saddlebag Lake.

One of the primary concerns is the possible depletion of the water levels in Saddlebag Lake. The mining operation, by using water slurry in the extraction process, may result in a significant reduction in the available water for local ecosystems, wildlife, and our surrounding area. Our water wells are within 1000 ft of this mining operation.

Semi-truck traffic will increase, which causes many issues including wear and tear on the local roads and traffic safety. The noise and air pollution generated by the trucks are detrimental to the quality of life for those of us living in the area.,

Health hazards are many, primarily from inhaling fine silica dust. Silicosis, lung cancer, COPD, disease and cardiovascular disease. We are 2 communities filled with >1100 taxpayers over 55 years of age. Most of us already having health concerns. This is another nail in the coffin for our health concerns.

Furthermore, the mining operation's use of bright , artificial light during night hours, particularly white light, creates a harsh glare that affects the health and well-being of nearby residents and wildlife.

I urge you to consider the long-term environmental and community impacts of this project. Would YOU like to live next to a sand mine?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Tammy Kuski
South Shore Resort
7337 Highway 60

January 2, 2026

Dear Commissioner:

My name is Suzanne Speidel and I am a full-time resident of Saddlebag Lake Resort in Lake Wales. I am sure you are aware of the situation which has been going on here and our community's strong opposition to the sand pit Number LDCU-2025-29. As you are aware the planning commission did rule in our favor but as expected the petitioner appealed that decision. We now are facing an uphill battle to try and protect our vibrant community which we feel is a little piece of paradise. We have been misrepresented in the petitioners filing as a leisure, recreational area. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our roots were planted way back in the early 1970's as a fishing camp, however today we are a 55+ community of 784 homes with over a thousand residents, with almost 300 full-time. We own our home sites which range from RV lots, single wide, double wide and manufactured homes. Some of our homes have risen in price to \$300K. We pay taxes on our properties, We have many activities, a pool, heated SPA, Recreational room, Tennis & Pickleball courts, Shuffleboard courts, Boat docks, a Beach house and our own postal office as well as our own water treatment plant and sewer system. Our activities and clubs are many and include a Woman's Club, Men's Club, Social dances, Christmas Boat Parade, Christmas Golf cart parade and the list goes on and on. One of our most wonderful areas is that of our non-denominational community Church, which is very active in helping many in need through food drives and donations to the Lake Wales Care Center.

I really wanted to give you a sense of who we are and what we do and why I feel that having a sand mine next door to us would be detrimental to our way of life, the ecosystem, protected wildlife such as families of sand hill cranes and bald eagles along with others.

The petitioner would have you believe that there would be no negative effects with their plan. I beg to differ with this as I have read numerous articles about the ill effects of sand mining in an area this close. My biggest concern is what happens to all the sand above the mine in a hurricane? Will it not blow in our direction? They will come to this meeting with expert after expert leaning in their direction. I am not an expert in this area, but I do recognize articles from Yale University, National Geographic, The Environmental Law Institute, The Audubon Society and others I have read to be experts in the detriments of sand mining.

The petitioner would also tell you that there would not be any impact on traffic. This also could not be further from the truth. They would cite studies done where traffic would not be a problem, however these studies were not done on the most active hours of the day or the busiest days of the week. Once again, this expert opinion only serves to meet their needs. Route 60 in this area is extremely dangerous now. Just imagine what an additional 500+ routes to and from the proposed sand mine would do? Would you want your children or grand children accessing a school bus here? Would you want your family to live in this area? Take a ride here and visually experience what we see. Recently near town there was a sand truck from another mine that partially dumped a load, I know because we were stopped in traffic during the aftermath of this. Take a ride along this area of Route 60 and see the immense holes in width and depth left once the sand mine is depleted. These areas are not of any value or use to anyone. The bottom line here is not the need for sand, that can be done in many other non-vibrant areas, it is the

desire for money by the petitioner. For me it boils down to what is more important the desire for money or sustaining protected wildlife and human life for generations to come?

On a more personal note, I am a retired Registered Nurse with a Bachelor's degree in Nursing and a Master's degree in Health Care Administration. I have seen the ravages of lung conditions due to inhaling substances. I was born and raised in the Pittsburgh Pennsylvania area and have seen what both steel mills and coal mining can do to the lungs. Silica from sand can and will be inhaled at this level regardless of what those experts say. I fear for my own life as I am a 2-time cancer survivor and have 3 autoimmune conditions. To me this project is clearly incompatible with the surrounding area. Thank you for your attention to this matter

Respectfully,

Suzanne Speidel 21 Royal Coachman St. SLR, Lake Wales

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 4:39 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Concerns regarding Highlands Club Development

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: Carol Grote <csithompson99@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 3:11 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Concerns regarding Highlands Club Development

You don't often get email from csithompson99@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

As a resident of Polk County, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed high-density development known as Highlands Club, located at Crews Lake Drive and Yarborough Road, in anticipation of the upcoming County Commission Meeting scheduled for January 6th.

The proposed density does not align with the established character of our community. The transition from one-acre lots to 6,000 sq. ft. lots is not a transition—it's an overwhelming shift that threatens our local infrastructure, school capacity, and road safety.

I respectfully request that the Commission deny the Highlands Club proposal as submitted.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our community.

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:51 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Mammoth Grove Sand Mine

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: Tammy Kuski <tammykuski@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:22 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Mammoth Grove Sand Mine

You don't often get email from tammykuski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To the Polk County Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the Mammoth Grove Sand Mine. My home is located at South Shore Resort on Saddlebag Lake.

One of the primary concerns is the possible depletion of the water levels in Saddlebag Lake. The mining operation, by using water slurry in the extraction process, may result in a significant reduction in the available water for local ecosystems, wildlife, and our surrounding area. Our water wells are within 1000 ft of this mining operation.

Semi-truck traffic will increase, which causes many issues including wear and tear on the local roads and traffic safety. The noise and air pollution generated by the trucks are detrimental to the quality of life for those of us living in the area.,

Health hazards are many, primarily from inhaling fine silica dust. Silicosis, lung cancer, COPD, disease and cardiovascular disease. We are 2 communities filled with >1100 taxpayers over 55 years of age. Most of us already having health concerns. This is another nail in the coffin for our health concerns.

Furthermore, the mining operation's use of bright , artificial light during night hours, particularly white light, creates a harsh glare that affects the health and well-being of nearby residents and wildlife.

I urge you to consider the long-term environmental and community impacts of this project. Would YOU like to live next to a sand mine?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Tammy Kuski
South Shore Resort
7337 Highway 60

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 2:44 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

Thanks,
Ana

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01 Bartow, FL 33831-9005 863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Alana Payne <alanapayne1960@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 1:32 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

[You don't often get email from alanapayne1960@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Sent from my iPhone

>
>>> Dear Polk County Planning Commissioners,
>>>
>>> I strongly oppose the appeal of LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine. This use is not compatible with an adjacent 55+ community.
>>>

>>> The approval of the Mammoth Grove Mine would have disastrous implications on Saddlebag Lake Resort, a residential community of nearly 800 households that has been a thriving part of East Polk County since its grand opening in 1973.

>>>

>>> The Polk County Development Review Committee claims the request is compatible with the surrounding area that is very sparse. Really? Nearly 800 households that have existed and paid county taxes for over 50 years is considered sparse? Did anyone from the Development Review Committee do a site inspection? Apparently not or they would have seen an active adult retirement community with residents enjoying an exceptional quality of life that's a legacy of previous Saddlebaggers for 50+ years. This isn't something to cast aside because of a request for a borrow pit that offers nothing but negatives in every aspect of its existence.

>>>

>>> A quick Google search of open pit mining is a litany of woes; noise, air pollution contributing to respiratory problems, water pollution and water table depletion, negative affect on the environment and endangered species, an astonishing amount of increased heavy truck traffic on Highway 60 in the amount of a daily average of 1,072 would obviously increase traffic accidents, and all of these factors would certainly lower home values in Saddlebag Lake Resort. Is this abundance of negative components of open pit mining contributing to a diminished quality of life for senior citizens so insignificant to Dick Crockett, the applicant, and to Polk County Commissioners?

>>>

>>> Opposition to the Mammoth Grove Mine isn't an example of "not in my backyard." In 2005, Saddlebag residents came to a Polk County Commission meeting to support the zoning change that would have allowed residential development on our northern perimeter by the Berry Corporation. Last year, we were sad to see the orange groves on our western perimeter bulldozed down and burned but accept the reasons for change. And, we know residential development is inevitable on that same western border and probably won't be opposed. But a sand mining operation bringing a multitude of problems is not compatible with a 55+ residential community recently celebrating its 50th anniversary as a part of Polk County.

>>>

>>> Considering our community demographic is retired senior adults seeking the quiet enjoyment of a healthy, safe environment, I ask the applicant, Dick Crockett, and all Polk County Commissioners the following question? Would you want your parents or grandparents retirement lives to be adversely impacted by the addition of an open pit sand mining operation? Of course you wouldn't. A sand mining pit next to nearly 800 homes in a long established senior retirement community is not compatible so a decision to deny this request is not really that difficult.

>>>

>>> Please, I urge the Polk County Commission to deny the request for appeal of LDCU-2025-29 that allows the Mammoth Grove Mine adjacent to Saddlebag Lake Resort.

>>>

>>> Freda Ward, Bruce Ward, Alana Payne-Ward

>>> 21 Saddlebag Lake Road North, Saddlebag Lake Resort Sent from my

>>> iPhone

>>>

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2025 9:08 AM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: LDCU-1025-29 Appeal

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: GILLIES <sdgillies@rogers.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 27, 2025 5:07 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: LDCU-1025-29 Appeal

You don't often get email from sdgillies@rogers.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Ms. Santiago

Please excuse the method used to send this information to you. I am 77 years old and have resided in Saddlebag Lake Resort for 20 years. I am hoping my thoughts will help you decide to oppose the proposed Sand Mine.

Thank you

Steve Gillies

705 345-
6089

Thou

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employed
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Please vote to oppose the mine.

[Sent from Rogers Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2025 9:55 AM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Cc: Suggs, Kay
Subject: FW: Saddlebag residents are trapped behind sandmine trucks!

Good morning,

Received on behalf of the Board.

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
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From: Treva Maris <trevamaris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2025 9:31 AM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Nance, Ivan <IvanNance@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Saddlebag residents are trapped behind sandmine trucks!

You don't often get email from trevamaris@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear board commissioners,
Setting aside all the negative affects the Hwy. 60 sandmines will cause,

The traffic study did not take into affect the exiting of our resort. I don't see how trucks will be able to come and go from Saddlebag Lake Resort. As a community member i find it very difficult and dangerous to pull on to Hwy. 60 right now. If you have to cross traffic to go opposite of town, there is never a traffic opening to cross both roads. You are forced to stop in the middle of the two crossroads with low visibility and wait for an opening in traffic again. I can't imagine the backup on our only road out and the lines of trucks waiting to pull out in 70 mph traffic! It will never work! You will have to put up stoplights here. Thank you, Treva Maris.

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 3:14 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Cc: Suggs, Kay
Subject: Opposition to De-Novo Public Hearing - LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine

Good afternoon,

Ms. Freda Ward (863-455-4796; 21 Saddlebag Trail N, Lake Wales) called to let the commissioners know that she is strongly opposed to LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine De-Novo Public Hearing. She stated that she has serious health issues and is concerned that exposure to the silica dust would be very harmful to her lungs, as she already has lung damage due to war-related exposure.

She has lived in the area for 30 years and asks for the request to be denied.

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 2:34 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Cc: Suggs, Kay
Subject: FW: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

Good afternoon,

Received on behalf of the Board.

Thanks,
Ana

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01 Bartow, FL 33831-9005 863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
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-----Original Message-----

From: Alana Payne <alanapayne1960@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 1:46 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine - Appeal Case Number LDCU-2025-29

[You don't often get email from alanapayne1960@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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>>
>> Dear Polk County Planning Commissioners,
>>
>> I strongly oppose the appeal of LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine. This use is not compatible with an adjacent 55+ community.
>>

>> The approval of the Mammoth Grove Mine would have disastrous implications on Saddlebag Lake Resort, a residential community of nearly 800 households that has been a thriving part of East Polk County since its grand opening in 1973.

>>

>> The Polk County Development Review Committee claims the request is compatible with the surrounding area that is very sparse. Really? Nearly 800 households that have existed and paid county taxes for over 50 years is considered sparse? Did anyone from the Development Review Committee do a site inspection? Apparently not or they would have seen an active adult retirement community with residents enjoying an exceptional quality of life that's a legacy of previous Saddlebaggers for 50+ years. This isn't something to cast aside because of a request for a borrow pit that offers nothing but negatives in every aspect of its existence.

>>

>> A quick Google search of open pit mining is a litany of woes; noise, air pollution contributing to respiratory problems, water pollution and water table depletion, negative affect on the environment and endangered species, an astonishing amount of increased heavy truck traffic on Highway 60 in the amount of a daily average of 1,072 would obviously increase traffic accidents, and all of these factors would certainly lower home values in Saddlebag Lake Resort. Is this abundance of negative components of open pit mining contributing to a diminished quality of life for senior citizens so insignificant to Dick Crockett, the applicant, and to Polk County Commissioners?

>>

>> Opposition to the Mammoth Grove Mine isn't an example of "not in my backyard." In 2005, Saddlebag residents came to a Polk County Commission meeting to support the zoning change that would have allowed residential development on our northern perimeter by the Berry Corporation. Last year, we were sad to see the orange groves on our western perimeter bulldozed down and burned but accept the reasons for change. And, we know residential development is inevitable on that same western border and probably won't be opposed. But a sand mining operation bringing a multitude of problems is not compatible with a 55+ residential community recently celebrating its 50th anniversary as a part of Polk County.

>>

>> Considering our community demographic is retired senior adults seeking the quiet enjoyment of a healthy, safe environment, I ask the applicant, Dick Crockett, and all Polk County Commissioners the following question? Would you want your parents or grandparents retirement lives to be adversely impacted by the addition of an open pit sand mining operation? Of course you wouldn't. A sand mining pit next to nearly 800 homes in a long established senior retirement community is not compatible so a decision to deny this request is not really that difficult.

>>

>> Please, I urge the Polk County Commission to deny the request for appeal of LDCU-2025-29 that allows the Mammoth Grove Mine adjacent to Saddlebag Lake Resort.

>>

>> Freda Ward,

>> 21 Saddlebag Lake Road North, Saddlebag Lake Resort Sent from my

>> iPhone

>>

December 20, 2025

Commissioner Troutman:

My name is Suzanne Speidel and I am a full-time resident of Saddlebag Lake Resort in Lake Wales. I am sure you are aware of the situation which has been going on here and our community's strong opposition to the sand pit Number LDCU-2025-29. As you are aware the planning commission did rule in our favor but as expected the petitioner appealed that decision. We now are facing an uphill battle to try and protect our vibrant community which we feel is a little piece of paradise. We have been misrepresented in the petitioners filing as a leisure, recreational area. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our roots were planted way back in the early 1970's as a fishing camp, however today we are a 55+ community of 784 homes with over a thousand residents, with almost 300 full-time. We own our home sites which range from RV lots, single wide, double wide and manufactured homes. Some of our homes have risen in price to \$300K. We have many activities, a pool, heated SPA, Recreational room, Tennis & Pickleball courts, Shuffleboard courts, Boat docks, a Beach house and our own postal office as well as our own water treatment plant and sewer system. Our activities and clubs are many and include a Woman's Club, Men's Club, Social dances, Christmas Boat Parade, Christmas Golf cart parade and the list goes on and on. One of our most wonderful areas is that of our non-denominational community Church, which is very active in helping many in need through food drives and donations to the Lake Wales Care Center.

I really wanted to give you a sense of who we are and what we do and why I feel that having a sand mine next door to us would be detrimental to our way of life, the ecosystem, protected wildlife such as families of sand hill cranes and bald eagles. I noticed that in your Bio you have focused on preserving land and natural resources for future generations. Also mentioned was protecting public safety and managing infrastructure to ease congestion. Having a sand mine this close to us with access onto State Route 60 being utilized by over 500 truck trips daily would prove to be a disaster to an already heavily truck traveled road.

The petitioner would have you believe that there would be no negative effects with their plan. I beg to disagree with this as I have read numerous articles about the ill effects of sand mining in an area this close. My biggest concern is what happens to all the sand above the mine in a hurricane? Will it not blow in our direction? They will come to this meeting with expert after expert leaning in their direction. I am not an expert in this area, but I do recognize articles from Yale University, National Geographic, The Environmental law Institute, The Audubon Society and others I have read to be experts in the detriments of sand mining.

On a more personal note, I am a retired Registered Nurse with a Bachelor's degree in Nursing and a master's degree in health care administration. I have seen the ravages of lung conditions due to inhaling substances. I was born and raised in the Pittsburgh Pennsylvania area and have seen what both steel mills and coal mining can do to the lungs. Silica from sand can and will be inhaled at this level regardless of what those experts say. I fear for my own life as I am a 2-time cancer survivor and have 3 autoimmune conditions. To me this project is clearly incompatible with the surrounding area. Thank you for your attention to this matter

Suzanne Speidel 21 Royal Coachman St. SLR, Lake Wales

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 8:58 AM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Cc: Suggs, Kay
Subject: FW: #LDCV-2025-29 Appeal

Good morning,

Received on behalf of the Board.

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
863.534.6422; 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

Please Note: Florida has a very broad Public Records Law. Most written communications to or from state and local officials regarding state or local business are public records available to the public and media upon request. Your email communications may therefore be subject to public disclosure.

From: Molly Title <mollyjtitle@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 19, 2025 6:53 AM
To: Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>
Cc: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; billbrasswell@polkfl.gov; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>
Subject: #LDCV-2025-29 Appeal

You don't often get email from mollyjtitle@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Polk County BoCC Email System. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Commissioner Wilson,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed sand mines next to my community, Saddlebag Lake Resort. When I moved here, I never considered the possibility that the surrounding agricultural land could be mined and trucked away, leaving an ugly scar filled with water of questionable quality. If you allow this project to go forward, you are sending a clear message to potential new Polk County residents and businesses- Polk County welcomes environmental degradation, and will allow it to occur right next to your home or business.

Thank you for your consideration,
Marianna Title

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 3:30 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]: LDCU-2025-29

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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From: CHRIS WRIGHT <chriswrightmkd@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 3:07 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; billbraswell@polk-colk.net; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: LDCU-2025-29

You don't often get email from chriswrightmkd@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Polk County Commissioners,

I just wanted to say thank you for voting no today on LDCU-2025-29 (Mammoth Grove Mine) I do believe this would have been a severe impact to all the residents in this entire area not just the residents of Saddlebag Lake Resort. I currently have a home in the resort and plan to winter there when I retire in 2 years. Until then I only get to use it a few months a year. My Mom and Dad lived there for 30 years, and both served on the board it is a wonderful place, and I look forward to spending my golden years there also. I know there will be appeals to this proposal but please

consider air quality monitoring, water quality monitoring, and environmental impacts. I hope the no you chose today will remain in the future. The safety of the people you represent needs to be first and foremost. Thank you,

Christopher G. Wright

17 Saddlebag Trail N

Lake Wales FL 33898

19583 Pine Landing Dr

Grand Rapids MN 55744

(218)259-8517

Chriswrightmkd@yahoo.com

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 11:07 AM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: For immediate attention: LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine - opposition view

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
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From: A Schaub <a_schaub@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 3:28 PM
To: A Schaub <a_schaub@outlook.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: For immediate attention: LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine - opposition view

You don't often get email from a_schaub@outlook.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear committee or influential planning contributor, I am contacting you to provide input on an upcoming decision related to land use in Polk Co. Florida.

I strongly oppose LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine which is slated for approval at a Public Hearing on December 3, 2025. This use is not compatible with the adjacent community of nearly 800 tax paying property owners. The approval of the Mammoth Grove Mine would have a devastating and disastrous impact on Saddlebag Lake area

residents, a long-standing residential community thriving in Eastern Polk County since 1973.

A search of open pit mining provides a litany of environmental implications; noise, air pollution contributing to respiratory problems, water pollution and water table depletion, negative affect on the environment and impact to many native species of animals. An astonishing amount of heavy truck traffic leaving the pit along with the aforementioned factors would certainly put long term pressure on property values, thus resulting in lower taxing revenue for Polk County.

Opposition to the Mammoth Grove Mine isn't an example of "not in my backyard." In 2005, Saddlebag residents came to a Polk County Commission meeting to support the zoning change that would have allowed residential development on our northern perimeter by the Berry Corporation. In 2024, we were saddened to witness the removal of orange groves on our western perimeter bulldozed down and burned but accepted the reasons for change. We understand residential development is inevitable on that same western border but a sand mining operation bringing a multitude of problems is clearly not compatible and appropriate to such a long-term valuable property close to Lake Wales.

Please, I urge the Polk County Commission to vote no on the request of LDCU-2025-29 that would permit mining and sand removal for many years to come.

Anita Schaub

Owner, 3 Beaverkill Drive, Saddlebag Lake Resort

Lake Wales, FL 33853

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 4:51 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]: Mammoth Grove mine a bad idea

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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From: jenkins1223@verizon.net <jenkins1223@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 4:44 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: Mammoth Grove mine a bad idea

You don't often get email from jenkins1223@verizon.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

My name is Alan Jenkins, and I own a home at 1803 Cypress Lake Rd.

I've known you and Alex for many years, and I hope you can help.

Cypress Lake directly borders the proposed mine property, separated only by Mammoth Grove Rd.

I have read the emailed complaints from residents at Saddlebad Lake, and agree with their concerns.

Cypress Lake is even closer to the proposed mine than Saddlebag Lake, and our community has a shared well that would be negatively impacted by the change in the water table (level of water and water quality). Additionally, some residents have private wells that would be even worse off,

I have personally witnessed gopher tortoises and other wildlife on this land. There are a few natural ponds on this land that would be destroyed,

Cypress Lake, Parks Lake and Lake Thomas are all spring-fed. A mine would create a major disruption to water flow underground and potentially "dry up" the springs.

Bartow lost Kissengen Springs thanks to mining. We know better now (or we should) and we don't need to repeat that mistake in Lake Wales.

Thanks for your consideration.

Regards,

Alan Jenkins

Yannone, Lyndsay

From: Pereira, Ana on behalf of Santiago, Martha
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 4:50 PM
To: White, Margo; Yannone, Lyndsay
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]: For Immediate Attention: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine, Case Number LDCU-2025-29

Thanks,
Ana



Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , P.O. Box 9005, Drawer BC01
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From: Dawn Sschwent <des4840@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 4:30 PM
To: Call, Planner On <PlannerOnCall@polk-county.net>; Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; rickeilson@polk-county.net; BillBraswell@polk-co.net; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; rgibson@lakewslesfl.gov; jhillgoss@lakewalesfl.gov; Grohowski, Andrew <andrewgrohowski@polkfl.gov>; mike@hickmanhomes.net; lmschultz21@gmail.com; olecowpoke@gmail.com; robertbeltran@polk-county.net
Subject: [EXTERNAL]: For Immediate Attention: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine, Case Number LDCU-2025-29

You don't often get email from des4840@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

December 2, 2025

To Those Whom It May Concern:

Re: Opposition to Mammoth Grove Mine, Case Number LDCU-2025-29

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Dawn Schwent, a full time resident of Saddlebag Lake Resort.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to LDCU-2025-29 Mammoth Grove Mine, which is slated for approval at a Public Hearing on DECEMBER 3, 2025 of which I was given notice of by letter only on November 26, 2025. Please note the letter was received the day before Thanksgiving which is a four (4) day weekend.

I strongly oppose the Conditional Use approval of a sand mine on property which abuts our Residential community of nearly 800 residential homes (Saddlebag Lake Resort), of which I am a full time resident.

The Polk County Development Review Committee claims that "the request is compatible with the surrounding area as the residential density in this area is very sparse". They have inaccurately assessed the surrounding area land use, as the county Zoning Maps incorrectly call out our community as "Leisure/Recreation". We are NOT Leisure/Recreation land use. We are RESIDENTIAL. We pay Residential Property Taxes

on each and every one of our homes. Sand mines are not compatible with Residential areas. The air quality will gravely affect all of the residents as well as visitors and family who come into our homes and the place we consider our Paradise. Our water quality for consumption of drinking and wildlife will be adversely impacted not only for us immediately as well as any future residents and wildlife.

The safety of our residents as well as the general public on Highway 60 is a huge concern with the proposed influx of traffic with large equipment throughout the day.

I have invested most of my lifesaving into securing a home at Saddlebag to live out my remaining years of life as well as to be able to pass onto my children and grandchildren a place in which I enjoy. Of which I feel if this goes through my investment and efforts are all in vain.

For the sake of mine, my fellow Saddlebag neighbors and future generations the safety of our health, road safety and well as the wildlife in which we all and strive to protect, I am respectfully requesting that the Conditional Use application be denied.

Sincerely,

Dawn Schwent
25 Saddlebag Trail

Lake Wales, FL
Saddlebag Lake Resort

From: [Nance, Ivan](#)
To: [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: LDCU-2025-29
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 8:21:42 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Lyn Larson <chuckalyn55@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2026 12:28 PM
To: Nance, Ivan <IvanNance@polkfl.gov>
Subject: LDCU-2025-29

[You don't often get email from chuckalyn55@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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I am a 91 year old widow and a resident of Saddlebag Lake Resort. This has been my permanent home since 1994. My parents bought here and became Florida residents in 1976. I have two children that love this resort and are now permanent Florida residents, also.

It is extremely upsetting and frightening to me that Polk County Commissioners would even consider approving a sand mine and all it entails within 500 feet of our beautiful resort.

I strongly request that you reject appeal LDCU-2025-29.

Lynette Larson
3 Catskill Circle
Lake Wales, FL
33898

From: [Pereira, Ana](#)
To: [White, Margo](#); [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: Lake Wales sand mines
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 3:06:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira

Executive Assistant to the Board



Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005

District 4: 863.534.6422; **District 5:** 863.534.6049

AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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From: Pam <cola3158@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:48 PM
To: Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Lake Wales sand mines

You don't often get email from cola3158@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Pam <cola3158@gmail.com>
Date: January 30, 2026 at 1:44:30 PM EST
To: beckytroutman@polkfl.gov
Subject: Lake Wales sand mines

Madam-

I am a property owner in Saddlebag Lake Resort in Lake Wales.
The proposed sand mines sited extremely close to our park would be detrimental for the community, our park, the air quality, traffic on state route 60, our lake and others, the noise.....
and just on and on.

Saddlebag Lake Resort has been here for 50+ years with many generations experiencing this wonderful, calm, family life-style way of living.

The sand mines would destroy all of this!!!

Just for the money, is it truly worth all this destruction?

Please STOP this project!!!!

Pamela Rupp
31 Ginger Quill Circle
Lake Wales
513-673-9205
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Nance, Ivan](#)
To: [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: PLEASE VOTE NO TO LDCU-2025-29!
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 8:21:27 AM

From: Tod Davis <todc.18@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2026 9:58 AM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; Nance, Ivan <IvanNance@polkfl.gov>
Subject: PLEASE VOTE NO TO LDCU-2025-29!

You don't often get email from todc.18@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please consider us rank and file voters and vote down this terrible use of Florida land that could be put to much better uses than a sand mine. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Tod Davis, 5346 Saddlebag Lake Rd., Lake Wales, Fl 33898

From: [Pereira, Ana](#)
To: [White, Margo](#); [Yannone, Lyndsay](#)
Subject: FW: LDCU-2025-29
Date: Thursday, February 12, 2026 4:28:02 PM

Received on behalf of the Board.

Thank you!

Ana C. Pereira
Executive Assistant to the Board

Polk County Board of County Commissioners
330 West Church St. , PO Box 9005, Drawer BC01
Bartow, FL 33831-9005
District 4: 863.534.6422; District 5: 863.534.6049
AnaPereira@PolkFL.gov www.PolkFL.gov

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-----Original Message-----

From: Win Stevens <stevensdvm@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 1:08 PM
To: Troutman, Becky <beckytroutman@polkfl.gov>; Wilson, Rick <RickWilson@polkfl.gov>; Braswell, Bill <BillBraswell@polkfl.gov>; Scott, Michael <michaelscott@polkfl.gov>; Santiago, Martha <MarthaSantiago@polkfl.gov>
Subject: LDCU-2025-29

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Dear Commissioner,

As a Lake Wales area resident, I vote no and urge you to vote no on the 855 acre Mammoth Grove sand mine proposal from PH Citrus LLC. I'm in agreement with your Polk County Planning Commission that this land use change is not compatible with the surrounding area. Thank you for all that you do for our county.

Winslow B Stevens, DVM
608 Thornburg Road
Babson Park, FL 33827
914 456-2647

