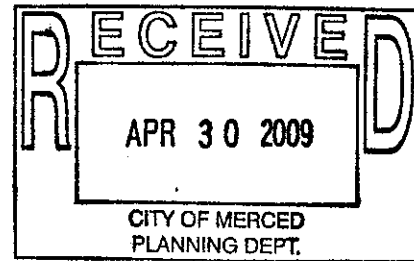


John Honnette
2543 15th Avenue
Kingsburg, CA 93631
559-859-7800



City of Merced Planning Division
678 West 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Fax #: 209-725-8775

To City of Merced Planners:

I am opposed to the building of the proposed Wal-Mart distribution center near Merced for these reasons:

Air Quality Impact:

1. The project is estimated to produce 74,812.1 tons of unmitigated carbon dioxide per year. For perspective, the world's largest cruise ship weighs 74,000 tons.
2. In 2005, Merced County emitted 167 tons of carbon dioxide per day. That works out to 60,955 tons per year. This facility would more than double greenhouse gas emissions for the county.
3. Wal-Mart's Apple Valley distribution center uses multiple hybrid diesel trucks to reduce the impact of air emissions, but they have made no such commitments to Merced for doing anything like that.
4. Approving this project will create many more days of the year when children suffering from asthma won't be able to play outside because of the poor air quality.

Traffic Impact:

1. The DEIR Traffic Study underestimates the Project's traffic impacts because it fails to measure those impacts against existing traffic conditions. Instead, the DEIR examines those impacts against hypothetical future traffic conditions that include traffic from housing that may never be built or occupied.
2. As a result, the DEIR masks the extent to which this project is a direct cause of traffic conditions going from acceptable to unacceptable at 4 intersection locations in the a.m. peak and 5 intersections in the p.m. peak.
3. The DEIR fails to estimate, disclose or mitigate the Project's traffic impacts on residential quality of life along affected streets. The City of Merced adopted Neighborhood Traffic Calming Guidelines in January 2008. The DEIR makes no effort to evaluate whether Project traffic conforms to or conflicts with the goals and policies of the adopted traffic calming.
4. Although the project description claims that the Project will provide a parking area for trucks that arrive at hours when the Project's entry gates are closed, the Project site plan in the DEIR shows no such area.

Urban Decay Findings:

1. The creation of a Wal-Mart distribution center will lower residential property values in the area near the site. Noise, pollution and a nearby industrial location have all been shown to reduce property values in numerous economic studies.
2. This area has already been hit hard by the current housing downturn, which is likely to persist for awhile. Lower property values will make it even more difficult for some families to get out from under their "upside down" mortgages thus increasing foreclosure rates.

3. There is no guarantee that the few jobs created by this project will go to residents of Merced. You can expect that workers as far away as Modesto and Fresno will also take many of these jobs. It is likely that most of the benefits that these jobs create will go outside City limits.

4. The increased crime from urban decay, the costs of policing for noise mitigation, fire service, etc. will add considerably to the costs for the City of Merced. Will these costs be offset by taxes generated? Very possibly NO--the DEIR does not examine this issue, but citizens in Merced should be concerned.

Water Impact Findings:


1. The pattern of naturally occurring water runoff is serious at risk of being disturbed. The area of construction on the 230 acre site by this Project would reduce the amount of open land that can absorb rainwater, and such imperviousness could lead to bad flooding.

2. The Draft EIR proposes to use an outdated Storm Water Pollution Plan called Best Management Practices to prevent flooding--but many cities and counties in California have replaced that method with a far more effective standard called Integrated Management Practices which has been endorsed by the Governor and leaders of both political parties.

3. The construction of the Distribution Center will lead to increased pollution of the area's water, including groundwater, in certain instances even to toxic levels. The DEIR notes that construction wastes such as solvents, fuels, and the like could lead to the degradation of the existing water quality.

4. The oil and grease associated with having semi-trucks going to and from the Distribution Center could seep not only into drainage, but possibly also Merced's groundwater supply.

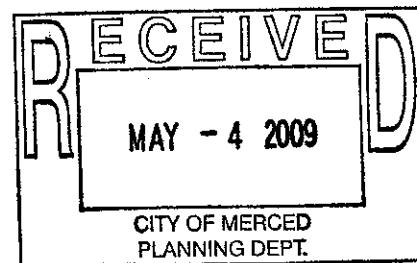
Thank you for considering my concerns with the proposed Wal-Mart distribution center near Merced.


John Honnette

May 2, 2009

From:
Charles M. Ashley
Tollhouse, CA 93667
559-855-6376

To:
City of Merced Planning Division
678 West 18th Street, Merced



Re: Proposed Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Merced

Honored Members of the Merced Planning Commission:

Please do not approve construction of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Merced.

A huge distribution center such as this would affect not only Merced but all of the San Joaquin Valley in terms of negative impacts on air quality, traffic, water use, and community and cultural issues.

In terms of air quality, this project would produce an estimated 75,000 tons of CO₂ annually. This will double the amount of CO₂ currently produced in Merced. Moreover, because of the nature of air masses and currents in the San Joaquin Valley, this project would affect all areas in the Valley, especially areas located south and east of Merced.

As for water, this project would both use more of the limited water available in the San Joaquin Valley and contribute to water pollution. Effluvia from these vehicles (including oil, grease, and antifreeze) would cause water pollution.

As for traffic, the hundreds of large trucks entering and leaving this facility each day would add unacceptably to the already high traffic not only in Merced but throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Not only would traffic place unnecessary stress on infrastructure, but it would negatively impact neighborhoods through which trucks would drive.

Finally, negative effects to the culture, community, and economy of Merced would be devastating. Residential property values would decline in nearby neighborhoods. Noise and pollution would increase. Wal-Mart has decimated small business in the Valley, particularly "mom and pops" who can't compete with Wal-Mart. So presumably building a large distribution center in Merced would lead to building more big box stores throughout the Valley and put even more small business owners out of business. Wal-Mart and similar big box stores lead to a monoculture that destroys community diversity. Therefore, even though these big box stores offer lower prices that are attractive to those with lower incomes, their negatively impact exceeds their positive contributions to lower income communities.

Thank you,
Charles M. Ashley
President, Save the Foothills Coalition— www.savethefoothills.org
Executive Board Member, Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter

Espinosa, Kim

From: Charles Ashley [wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 02, 2009 11:06 AM
To: Espinosa, Kim
Subject: Comment on Wal-Mart Distrib Center

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached my comment on the proposed Wal-Mart Distribution Center.

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Chip Ashley
www.savethefoothills.org

