LAND USE BOARD OF APPEALS

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                  BEFORE THE LAND USE BOARD OF APPEALS
                                                             DEC 9 5 55 PH 67
 2
                         OF THE STATE OF OREGON
 3
    BEVERLY LOUSIGNONT,
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             Petitioner,
 5
        vs.
                                          LUBA No. 87-065
6
    UNION COUNTY,
                                           FINAL OPINION
7
             Respondent,
                                             AND ORDER
8
        and
9
    R-DMAC,
10
             Participant.
11
        Appeal from Union County.
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        Beverly A. Lousignont, La Grande, filed the petition for
    review. Edward J. Sullivan, Portland, argued on behalf of
    petitioner.
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14
        Paul R. Hribernick, Portland, filed a response brief and
   argued on behalf of Respondent R-DMAC, Inc. With him on the
    brief was Rappleyea, Beck, Helterline, Spencer & Roskie.
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        No appearance by Respondent Union County.
        HOLSTUN, Referee; BAGG, Chief Referee; participated in the
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   decision.
18
             REMANDED
                                    12/09/87
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        You are entitled to judicial review of this Order.
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   Judicial review is governed by the provisions of ORS 197.850.
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Opinion by Holstun.

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NATURE OF THE DECISION

Petitioner appeals the county's approval of a conditional use permit. The conditional use permit allows a one acre expansion of an existing aggregate extraction operation conducted on a 32 acre parcel owned by Respondent R-DMAC, Inc. 1

MOTION TO DISMISS

9 Respondent R-DMAC, Inc. filed a motion to dismiss alleging 10 petitioner failed to timely serve it with a copy of the 11 petition for review. On November 6, 1987, we issued an order 12 denying the motion to dismiss. We adhere to our earlier 13 decision denying the motion to dismiss for the reasons stated 14 in that order. Lousignont v. Union County, ___ Or LUBA ____ 15 (LUBA No. 87-065, Order Denying Motion to Dismiss, November 6, 16 1987).

18 attention to page 4 of the petition for review where petitioner 19 states the decision at issue became final on July 15, 1987. 20 Respondent notes the notice of intent to appeal was filed 22 21 days after that date, and on this basis argues the appeal 22 should be dismissed. Petitioner's misstatement in the petition 23 notwithstanding, it is clear from the record that the decision 24 became final on July 16, not July 15. Record 7. The notice of 25 intent to appeal correctly identifies July 16 as the date the 26 decision became final. In these circumstances petitioner's

In reasserting its motion to dismiss, respondent calls our

- 1 misstatement in the petition for review provides no basis for
- ² dismissal.²

3 FACTS

- 4 The excavation site approved by this decision is located
- 5 within Township 2S, Range 38, EWM, Section 34, Tax Lot 1200.
- 6 Tax Lot 1200 includes approximately 32 acres and contains an
- 7 existing aggregate extraction site, areas where the respondent
- 8 apparently plans to seek permission for additional extraction
- 9 sites in the future and the one acre area approved by the
- 10 decision appealed in this case. The approximately one acre
- II area approved is the western portion of an area denoted "Pit
- 12 S-4" and is located immediately west of the Island City city
- 13 limits and the existing extraction operation in Pit S-4 which
- 14 is located within the city limits.
- North of the site are additional excavation pits from which
- 16 the aggregate has already been removed. Farther to the north
- 17 is the Grande Ronde River. Respondent's processing facility is
- 18 located north of the Grande Ronde River and aggregate from the
- 19 site would be removed to this facility for processing. An auto
- 20 and scrap metal salvage yard is located east of the site. The
- Union Pacific Railroad adjoins the site to the east. To the
- 22 south there are orchard and residential uses. Grazing and
- 23 residential uses are located to the west.
- The property is designated Farm Residential (FR) in the
- 25 city's comprehensive plan and zoned R-3. Aggregate removal and
- 26 processing is a conditional use in the R-3 zone.

- 1 The gravel extraction proposed at this site would begin
- 2 with removal of approximately 8 feet of overburden which is
- 3 stored for later reclamation use. Gravel is then removed in
- 4 three lifts of 7 or 8 feet each. The first lift extends down
- 5 to the water table at approximately 15 feet below the surface.
- 6 Removal of the next two lifts requires concurrent dewatering to
- 7 remove groundwater which infiltrates as excavation proceeds
- 8 below the water table. Dewatering is accomplished by pumping
- 9 water from the lowest point in the pit through a pipe to
- 10 adjacent mined out pits where it percolates back into the
- II ground. Excavation apparently will be discontinued when an
- 12 unsuitable clay layer is reached at a depth of approximately 30
- 13 to 35 feet. Excavated gravel is transported to a
- 14 crusher/washer plant. Spent wash water is discharged into a
- 15 mined out pit where the water percolates back into the shallow
- 16 groundwater. Record 172 a, Document 6 at p. 2.

17 FIRST ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR

- "The conditional use permit violates S 21.07 3.(C) of the Union County Zoning, Partition and Subdivision Ordinance, dated November 2, 1983."
- Section 21.07 3. (C)(2) provides as follows:
- "Contamination or impairment of the groundwater table, streams, rivers or tributary bodies thereto shall not
- be permitted as a result of the extraction and/or
- processing activity. All operations which include some form of washing process must make application
- 23 some form of washing process must make application with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- and comply with applicable laws, rules and regulations."
- Petitioner alleges Section 21.07 3. (C)(2) is a mandatory

- standard and the county failed to show the standard is met
- because the impacts of the extraction and processing cannot be
- 3 predicted accurately due to the variable nature of the
- 4 hydrology in the area. Petition for Review 8. According to
- 5 petitioner, the record shows there are two aquifers which may
- 6 be affected, one shallow and one deep.
- 7 Petitioner says the county does not dispute that the
- shallow aguifer will be affected when extraction reaches 15
- 9 feet below the surface and dewatering commences. 3 According
- 10 to petitioner the pump test data needed to predict accurately
- the rate of movement of the turbid water is not available.
- Petitioner also argues the evidence in the record shows the
- confining beds which separate the deeper aquifer from the
- shallow aquifer are variable and "provide only a partial
- separation between the shallow aquifer and deeper aquifer. 4
- 16 Petitioner claims heavy equipment to be used in the extraction
- 17 process increases chances for potential contamination or
- impairment of the groundwater.
- We interpret petitioner's first assignment of error to
- allege (1) the county improperly construed Section 21.07 3.
- (C)(2), and (2) there is not substantial evidence in the record
- 22 to support the county's conclusion the standard is met. See
- Hilliard v. Lane County Commrs., 51 Or App 587, 626 P2d 905,
- 24 <u>rev den</u> 291 Or 368 (1981).
- Respondent's answer to the first assignment of error is
- 26 essentially twofold. First, respondent asserts the county

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recognized Section 21.07 3.C. (2) is a mandatory standard, but
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    elected to interpret the standard to impose less than an
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    absolute proscription against any increase in turbidity.
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    Second, respondent claims the county relied extensively on
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    expert testimony which in turn establishes a record containing
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    substantial evidence to support the county's decision.
6
        In its brief respondent argues, in part, as follows:
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        "First, the county found that the lateral migration of
        any turbid groundwater was limited to a few tens of
               (Record 132.) This finding is supported by
        substantial evidence in the record. (Record 167 and
               * * * Second, the county found that no
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        turbidity in wells has been reported during the
        numerous years applicant has extracted aggregate in
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        the area. (Record 132.) This finding is supported by
                                              (Record 242.)
        substantial evidence in the record.
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        After making factual findings, the county conditioned
        approval on the applicant's maintenance of a 200 foot
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        setback from the south property line. (Record 13.)
        This setback is more than five times the maximum
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        estimated migration of any turbid groundwater in the
        shallow unconfined aquifer as found by the county.
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        (See, Record 167 and 242.) " Respondent's Brief 6.
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    Respondent also points to evidence in the record which supports
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    the county's finding that activity within the extraction pit
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    would not result in contamination or impairment of
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    groundwater.
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        "As part of the applicant's employee training program,
        equipment operators are instructed that no waste of
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        any type, such as garbage, oil or commercial
        industrial waste, shall be placed in the proposed pit.
22
        (Record 156-157)." Respondent's Brief 10.
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        The terms "contamination or impairment" are not defined in
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    the Union County Plan. The terms apparently do not have a
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    well-defined meaning, at least when used in the context
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presented by this case. The dictionary definition of
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- "contamination" is "to make impure or unclean." The term 2
- pollution is listed as a synonym. Webster's Ninth Collegiate 3
- Dictionary, 282 (1983). The dictionary definition of
- "impairment" is "to damage or make worse by or as if by
- diminishing in some material respect." Id. at 603. The county 6
- explained its view of the standard as follows: 7

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"We find that the DEQ water permit is presently in
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       preliminary draft form and contains a number of
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limitiations and requirements designed to both limit

any water (and ground water) contamination or

impairment and to provide a monitoring database to 10 verify that the limitations and requirements of the

permit adequately protect water and groundwater resources. We find that as a part of this permit

process, the DEQ has presently defined groundwater

contamination or impairment due to due to [sic] suspended solids (turbidity) as: 'An increase in

turbidity of 10 percent above background levels, as

measured by groundwater monitoring wells.' We understand that other definitions of 'contamination or

impairment' may be possible, but we find, for purposes of this conditional use application, that the Oregon

DEQ definition is a reasonable one. We find that

[Section 21.07 3. (C)(2) * * *] was not designed to prevent all contamination or impairment in water or

groundwater. We find that such a reading of this

standard would make it impossible to remove all of the 18 alluvial deposits near the Grande Ronde River because

any disturbance of the resource would create

turbidity. We further find that such an

interpretation of this standard is inconsistent with 20 the establishement of surface mining zones to the west

on the Grande Ronde River * * *.5 Furthermore, we

find that upland sites might not be able to meet the standard if it were interpreted to prohibit any

contamination or impairment." Record 132-133.

While it is not clear from the record, the referenced DEQ

standard apparently is OAR 341-41-725(2)(c).6

OAR 341-41-725(2)(c) does not use the terms "contamination or

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    impairment." Neither do the statutes implemented in part by
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    OAR 341-41-725(2)(c) use or define the terms "contamination or
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    impairment." However, they do define the term "pollution" as
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    follows:
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        "'Pollution' or 'water pollution' means such
        alteration of the physical, chemical or biological
        properties of any waters of the state, including
6
        change in temperature, taste, color, turbidity * * *
7
        which will or tends to, either by itself or in
        connection with any other substance, create a public
        nuisance which will or tends to render such waters
        harmful, detrimental or injurious to public health,
        safety or welfare, or to domestic, commercial,
        industrial, agricultural, recreational or other
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        legitimate beneficial uses or to livestock, wildlife,
        fish or other aquatic life or the habitat thereof."
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        ORS 468,700(3).
12
        The county in its finding quoted supra, and respondent in
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    its brief, appear to argue that "contamination or impairment"
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    need not be interpreted to proscribe any increase in turbidity
    no matter how small or localized. 7 Presumably under this
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    interpretation, there is no contamination or impairment as long
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    as turbidity increase does not exceed 10%. We do not believe
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    such an interpretation is contrary to the express language in
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    Section 21.07 3. (C)(2). Fifth Avenue Corporation v.
    Washington County, 282 Or 591, 599-600, 581 P2d 50 (1978). We
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    defer to local governments' interpretations of their own
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    ordinances when those interpretations are reasonable. Alluis
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   v. Marion County, 64 Or App 478, 481, 668 P2d 1242 (1983).8
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        The county's findings, however, while adopting DEQ's
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    standard as its own, do not clearly state that the applicant
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   will meet this standard. The county discussion of this
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issue shows the county believed the DEQ standard was designed
    to prevent water and ground water contamination or impairment
    and that the DEO permit is designed to alert the agency to any
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   potential contamination or impairment. However, the county
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   goes on to find that the
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        "applicant has agreed to operate his extraction
        operation in conformance of the terms of the DEQ water
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        permit as it is issued in final form. We further find
        that the applicant has expressed a willingness to
        adopt reasonable changes to control ground waters as
        may be indicated by the DEQ monitoring program. We
        find that the applicant's operations must comply with
        the applicable laws, rules and regulations of the
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        Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for the
        applicant to continue its operation." Record 133.
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        Rather than finding that the applicant will meet the
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   contamination and impairment standard as it is understood by
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    the county, the county leaves it to DEQ and the applicant to
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    insure that the operation will meet the standard.
                                                        In other
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   words, the county finds that there are enforcement procedures
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    in place which will insure compliance. As Section 21. 07 3.
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    (C)(2) is an approval standard, the county's approach is
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    impermissable. Margulis v. City of Portland, 4 Or LUBA 89, 98
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    (1981).
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        The first assignment of error is sustained.
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   SECOND ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR
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        "Approval of the conditional use permit violates
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        Article 20.09 significant Goal 5 resource areas of the
        Union County Zoning, Partition and Subdivision
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       Ordinance."
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       Section 20.09(1) provides as follows:
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        "Any land use action requiring county zoning of
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- 1 partitioning approval or any activity listed as a conflict in this ordinance which is within 1320 feet
- 2 of or could have an impact on:
- 3 "A. Significant historical sites or structures,
- "B. Significant scientific or natural areas,
- "C. Significant aggregate resource sites, 5
- 6 "D. Big game critical wildlife habitat areas and big game winter range, 7
 - "E. Significant avian habitat,
- 8 "F. Significant wetlands, and
- "G. Designated scenic waterways identified by the Union County Land Use Plan, shall be reviewed by 10
- the planning director for appropriate public notification measures and conflict resolution." 11
- The only standard contained in Section 20.09 that 12
- petitioner argues was violated is Section 20.09 5. (A) which 13
- provides 14
- "The following criteria shall be considered, as 15 applicable, during the appropriate decisionmaking process: 16
- "A. "The use proposed is a benefit to the ECONOMIC: 17 community and would meet a substantial public need or provide for a public good which clearly 18 outweighs retention of the resources listed in Section 20.09(1):"
- Petitioner disputes respondent's finding of a public need 20
- for the aggregate that would be produced. Petitioner claims 21
- the county failed to account accurately for all the operating 22
- costs that would be incurred as well as costs of mitigation. 23
- According to petitioner, the more cost-effective and prudent 24
- course of action for the county would be to examine the Grande 25
- Ronde Valley comprehensively to determine whether there are 26

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1 other more cost-effective sites.
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- Respondent answers first the county found no signficant
- Goal 5 resources are affected by this application; and,
- 4 therefore, Section 20.09 by its own terms does not apply.
- 5 While it could be clearer, the county did adopt a finding that
- 6 Section 20.09 does not apply. Record 138. 10 Petitioner does
- 7 not quarrel with the county's finding that Section 20.09 does
- 8 not apply. The county did, however, proceed in the alternative
- 9 and apply the standards contained in Section 20.09. Petitioner
- only challenges the county's alternative conclusion that the
- standards in Section 20.09 5.(A) are satisfied.
- The county's finding of nonapplicability is not erroneous
- on its face. 11 We conclude that petitioner was required to
- 14 assign this interpretation as error before proceeding to claim
- 15 the county erred in its alternative application of the
- 16 standards in 20.09. Because petitioner failed to assign this
- interpretation as error, we deny the second assignment of error.
- 18 However, in case we are mistaken, we will review the
- 19 county's findings to determine whether, if Section 20.09 5.(A)
- 20 is applicable, the county properly found the standard was met.
- 21 Petitioner appears to allege the findings of need are
- 22 defficient because they are conclusional and based on a
- 23 defective economic analysis. Respondent notes correctly that
- 24 petitioner does not argue that retention of the resources
- 25 identified in Section 20.09(1)(A) outweigh the economic value
- 26 of the use proposed by the applicant. Respondent states in its

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    brief
        "As no significant Goal 5 resources are present, the
        county can not weigh public need for the proposed use
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        against retention of such resources." Respondent's
        Brief 16.
        Respondent also argues as follows:
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        "The county court found that: (1) Aggregate is a
        necessary material for road and home building and
        other residential, commercial and industrial uses in
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        Union County; (2) there is a large annual need for
        such resources in Union County for both construction
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        and repair uses; and (3) applicant supplies a large
        portion of the necessary materials in Union County.
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        (Record 141)."
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        Respondent provides citations to the record for each of the
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    above findings.
                     The record shows the respondent applies 50% of
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    the county's aggregate supply, approximately 100,000 cubic
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    yards annually. The site at issue contains approximately
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    30,000 cubic yards.
                         The record also contains assessments of
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    need for aggregate in Union County. We believe the record is
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    sufficient to support the county's finding that Section 20.09
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    5. is satisfied, to the extent that it applies.
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        The second assignment of error is denied.
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        The decision is remanded.
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At oral argument petitioner questioned whether the approval 4 applied to a one acre site or to a larger area. The 5 application in the record describes the property at issue as Township 2S, Range 38, EWM, Section 34, Tax Lot 1900. included in the front of the record of this case shows this is 6 a 1.01 acre parcel. However, it is clear that Tax Lot 1900 is not the parcel for which approval was granted. Rather, the 7 site approved is contained in Tax Lot 1200. Record 109. addition, at oral argument petitioner noted a condition imposed by the county limits excavation on "Site S-4" to 10 acres. Record 7, 230. As no issue was raised in the petition for review regarding the size or location of the site approval, we need not address it. However, we believe it is reasonably 10 clear from the maps in the record at 246 and 172a (Document 18) that the approval is for an approximately one acre portion of 11 what is shown as "Pit S-4." The one acre portion of Pit S-4 is

apparently a portion of that excavation area falling outside

the Island City city limits.

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The petitioner in this case apparently represented herself up to the time of oral argument and prepared and filed the petition for review. However, she secured the services of an attorney to present oral argument on her behalf. Respondent was unaware that petitioner would be represented by counsel at oral argument and objected. We are aware of no basis upon which we could deny petitioner the right to be represented by counsel at oral argument. We recognize that respondent may have prepared for oral argument somewhat differently had it known petitioner was to be represented by counsel. However, petitioner did not request that oral argument be delayed and elected to proceed with oral argument as scheduled.

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Petitioner attributes the following finding to the county:

"It is likely that turbid groundwater conditions could occur where wells are constructed to utilize shallow groundwater above the clay strata underlying the gravel mining operation." Petition for Review 12.

Respondent correctly notes the quoted language does not appear in the finding as petitioner indicates. The

language does, however, appear in a report submitted by the respondent to the county. Record 172a, Document 6 at 2 p. 6. 3 Most of the adjoining wells used for domestic purposes apparently withdraw water from the deeper aquifer. Record 172a, Document 6 at p. 6. 5 6 We note that aggregate extraction is a permitted use 7 in the surface mining zone and the no "contamination or impairment" standard does not apply in that zone. 8 the county expressly defers to the Department of Environmental Quality to protect water quality. Record 172a, Document 3 at p. 52. 10 11 OAR 340-41-725 (2)(c) provides in relevant part: "Turbidity (Jackson Turbidity Units, JTU): No more 12 than a 10% cumulative increase in natural stream turbidity shall be allowed, as measured relative to a 13 control point immediately upstream of the turbidity causing activity. * * *" 14 15 While an undeveloped argument is made by petitioner 16 that equipment operating in the pit might cause contamination or impairment, petitioners arguments under 17 the first assignment of error otherwise are exclusively directed at turbidity. We believe the county's findings that equipment operation will not result in contamination 18 or impairment is adequate and supported by the record. 19 Record 130. 20 21 The county's findings in several places appear to take a different and impermissible course in applying the 22 standard. There is language suggesting the county is trying to 23 achieve by interpretation what could only be achieved by amending the standard. See, West Hill & Island Neighbors,

83-018, June 29, 1983), aff'd 68 Or App 782 (1984). Some of the findings suggest the county believes any increase

in turbidity is "contamination or impairment" but minimal

Or LUBA ___ (LUBA No.

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Inc. v. Multnomah County,

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contamination or impairment is allowable under Section 21.07 3. (C)(2). If this is what the county is saying, we disagree. Whatever "contamination or impairment" is, it is clear that Section 21.07 3. (C)(2) requires that it "shall not be permitted." If the county 3 believes it has adopted an impossible standard, the solution is to amend the standard, not to apply a substantial compliance standard to approve a desired project. See, West Hill & Island Neighbors, Inc. v. 5 Multnomah County, 68 Or App 782, 787, 683 P2d 1032 (1984); Federation of Seafood Harvesters v. Fish & Wildlife Comm., 6 291 Or 452, 460 632 P2d 777 (1981). The county's findings regarding the proper 7 interpretation and application of Section 21.07 3. (C)(2) are somewhat inconsistent. The findings in one place state turbidity must be more than minimal (i.e., greater than 10%) before it will result in contamination or impairment. However, the findings also use "increase in turbidity" interchangeably with "contamination or 10 impairment" but say some "contamination or impairment" must be allowed to make the standard workable. Because we 11 believe the findings, fairly read, adopt the former interpretation, and that interpretation is reasonable, we 12 defer to the county. 13

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The county only finds "it is unlikely that any turbidity from waste water discharge or dewatering process would cause turbidity or contamination of the Grande Ronde River." Record 132. Some of the county's findings on the possibility of turbidity impacts on the deep aquifer are equivocal. In several instances they indicate that information is not entirely complete, and the separation between the shallow and deep aquifer is not continuous. Record 131.

In our view, the existence of some scientific uncertainty and reflection of that uncertainty in the county's findings is not necessarily fatal. However, the county must reasonably interpret and correctly apply the relevant standard, Section 21.07 3. (C)(2). Also, the county's findings, taken as a whole, must support a conclusion that the standard is met and the evidence must support the county's findings and conclusions. Sunnyside Neighborhood v. Clackamas Co. Comm., 280 Or 3, 21-23, 569 P2d 1063 (1977).

While the evidence in the record does not absolutely preclude the possibility of some turbidity impacts, the record does show there has been no reported turbidity in nearby wells during the 15 years the applicant has operated in the area. In addition there was expert

testimony that the aquifers perform a filtering function
to remove any introduced turbidity. Record 172 a,
Document 5.

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The county's finding is as follows:

"We find that the County Comprehensive Plan lists none of the following areas, sites, structures or 5 habitat as being located within 1320 feet of the 6 proposed pit that is subject to this conditional use application: (A) Significant historical sites or 7 structures; (B) Significant scientific or natural areas; (C) Big game critical wildlife habitat areas 8 and big game winter range; (D) Significant avian habitat; (E) Significant wetlands; and (G) Designated 9 scenic waterways identified by the Union County Land Use Plan. We find that the areas for which the 10 conditional use has been requested is recognized as a potential aggregate extraction area but has not been 11 officially designated a "significant" aggregate We further find that the area affected resource site. by the conditional use application is immediately 12 adjacent to the city limits of Island City and in close proximity to extensive existing aggregate 13 extraction and processing facilities. In addition, we find that the area affected by the conditional use 14 application is connected with, and is an extension of, an existing active aggregate extraction site located 15 in a Surface Mining Zone within the boundaries of Island City, Oregon. We find that the proposed 16 conditional use does not present a more intense use of the land nor any different impact on any significant 17 resource areas in the vicinity idenfitied [sic] in the Union County Zoning Partition and Subdivision 18 Ordinance, if any, than the present extraction operations which are immediately adjacent to the 19 proposed conditional use site. We find that the requested conditional use, gravel extraction, is 20 consistent with the designation of the area set forth in the Union County Land Use Plan Supplement dated 21 June 13, 1984, as a potential aggregate site. We find that the discussion related to aggregate sites in the 22 Zoning, Partition and Subdivision Ordinance, specifically Article 20.09(6)(A), concerns itself with 23 minimizing conflicts which would be caused by using a

proposed aggregate extraction area for the

construction of residences or other uses listed as conditional uses. We find that there is no conflict

developing a proposed aggregate resource site for actual use as an aggregate extraction area. We find

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that because the site is identified in the County Land Use Plan Supplement as a potential aggregate site, proposed conditional use of the site presents no conflict between development and resource preservation. Accordingly, and consistent with our findings and conclusions in Parts II, III and IV above, we determine that the standards set forth in Article 20.09 are met to the extent that they are applicable.

"Notwithstanding our conclusion above, in the event that the individual standards of Article 20.09 would be deemed to apply to the site, we find that the criteria of each individual subsection of Article 20.09 are met by the proposed conditional use action."

Apparently the only possible Goal 5 resources in the area are significant aggregate resource sites. While the proposed site is not a designated significant aggregate resource site, there may be significant aggregate resource sites in the area. This theory for applying Section 20.09 was presented for the first time by petitioner at oral argument. We decline petitioner's request to use this theory as a basis for concluding Section 20.09 should apply.