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Dear Board of County Commissioners,

This letter is in opposition to the rezoning of parcels of land adjacent to Highway 105 and Red Rocks Ranch Dr. in the Tri-Lakes area. We are requesting that the rezoning application from 5 acre lots to 1/2 acre lots be denied. There are many reasons I believe this would be a mistake to allow. Allowing approximately 36 homes to go into an area that should only have 6 will drastically change the nature, appearance, feel and value of the surrounding community. If you were to drive the area and see the proposed site for yourself you would realize Highway 105 and Red Rock Ranch Dr. do not constitute any type of real buffer from the surrounding area. Rural ranch land, forest and wide open pastures are on every side of this proposed build site. Putting in any home sites that are anything smaller than 1 acre would cause that neighborhood to stick out like a sore thumb. It would appear very odd to have that higher density housing surrounded by 2.5 and 5 acre properties. While I am aware this discussion is supposed to be only about rezoning and if it conforms to the Tri-Lakes master plan, which it does not! There are many other reasons this rezoning should be denied that I would ask you to consider before making your decision.

First of which is safety, I believe additional congestion to an already busy area, with increased traffic due to the on-going construction on I-25, and the increased population growth in the Monument and Palmer Lake communities present a serious safety issue. Living in the Red Rock Ranch neighborhood we have only one reasonable access point to Highway 105. During winter weather, we consistently get several feet of snow and have vehicles that go off the road near that intersection. Red Rocks Ranch Dr. has curves and is fairly steep downhill coming into that section of road. Regardless of how slowly and cautiously one drives on ice and snow there, the angle of slope makes sliding off the road and accidents common. In the event of an emergency or evacuation due to fire or other threats and disasters, the lack of accommodating infrastructure at that intersection would create a bottleneck of residents that would be trapped trying to flee to safety. Introducing additional structures and traffic to that intersection would create a serious safety hazard.

Second, The environmental impacts of rezoning those parcels of land eliminate vital prairie land for the beautiful wildlife that makes our area so desirable. Additional structures and hard surfaces create barriers to the natural water flow and filtration that replenishes our already struggling aquifer system. The neighborhoods that currently exist in this area were specifically zoned as larger lots due to the strain on the aquifer. The overflow retention pond on the north side of that intersection is regularly dry now. It was rarely, if ever dry prior to the additional homes that have recently been added to the surrounding neighborhoods. That pond is a watering hole for a multitude of wildlife, including some on the endangered species list. The addition of somewhere around the 36 proposed homesites would be devastating to the ability of the aquifer to adequately replenish itself. In a period of extreme drought that we will inevitably face again, the additional demand put on the water system by this development would be disastrous.

Third, as stated above the increased population growth in the Monument and Palmer Lake communities not only present traffic and environmental problems, it also creates population density impacts on services such as the school system, and police and fire departments that are already burdened with rising populations and inadequate revenue to handle the additional costs and needs of the growing community. Last, we are a Military family, we have lived in a multitude of communities around the country. We have seen the wonderful long term effects of intelligent zoning and planning and the negative results of poor and inadequate zoning and planning. The parts of the country that are most desirable to live in are those that put thought and care into their zoning and don't deviate from their plans. Palmer Lake's master plan may be older but it has been followed and the neighborhood has not strayed from that plan. Yes, some of the lots in our area are zoned to 1/2 acre lots but none of them are built out that way. The entire community is at a minimum of 1 acre lots. The original planned zoning of 5 acre parcels for that section of land was the correct idea, for not only the immediate neighborhoods surrounding that section of land, but for the greater Tri-Lakes community as a whole. Allowing this rezoning will hurt the property values of everyone in the area. It would create a detrimental effect both to the community and the environment. We

moved to this area because we love the wild natural beauty and less crowded, peaceful atmosphere that the Red Rock Ranch and surrounding neighborhoods provide. We also bought in this area because we knew these lots were larger and we would not have to deal with population density areas and the inevitable problems that follow a higher density...which now there is a move to change. Please don't irreparably damage our area by allowing intelligent and beneficial planning to be altered by destructive and thoughtless rezoning to allow the developer to make a quick buck.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Andrea Rusco  
Red Rock Ranch Reserve board