

Chalise & Derek Freitag (“Opponents”)
16496 Mt. Herman Lane
Monument, CO 80132

Re: Opposition to the Fall Mountain Farm Agritainment Parking Expansion
Application: Request to Increase On-Site Parking Capacity from 50 to 225 Vehicles

To the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department:

I respectfully submit this letter in formal opposition to the application submitted by Fall Mountain Farm (“Farm”) seeking approval to increase on-site parking capacity from 50 vehicles to 225 vehicles. While agritainment is a permitted use within RR-5 zoning, the scale of the requested expansion (350%) raises substantial concerns regarding traffic safety, public welfare, and over-intensification of a rural residential area.

First, I want to make it clear that our opposition is not directed at the Roscios personally. Mr. and Mrs. Roscio (hereinafter “Roscios” or “Requestors”) have put genuine effort into creating what was originally presented to the community as a small, seasonal, weekend pumpkin patch. We recognize and respect the work that goes into running a farm, and we have no desire to prevent the Roscios from using their property for reasonable agritainment activities. Our goal is simply to preserve the balance between the peaceful character of this area and the original, modest intent of a pumpkin-patch-style operation.

Our property is one of the few that directly borders the Roscios’ land, and because of that proximity, we experience the full impact of the expanded activities. To be frank, I dread the fall weekends. We purchased our home specifically for its quiet setting, its remote feel, and the limited access that kept the area calm and private. Those qualities have been significantly diminished. What used to be peaceful autumn weekends are now filled with constant noise—children screaming, hayride tractors running nonstop, and a steady stream of visitors wandering beyond the event boundaries. We frequently encounter individuals “exploring” the area who end up on or near our property, often confused about where the event ends and private land begins.

These impacts go far beyond what was originally described to neighbors and beyond what is reasonable for a rural residential zone. Our concerns are not about stopping the farm from operating; they are about ensuring that the scale of the operation remains compatible with the surrounding community and the expectations of those who live here. The current level of activity has fundamentally changed the character of our weekends and the sense of privacy and tranquility that led us to invest in this location.

Our opposition is outlined below in order of the Letter of Intent (“LOI”).

1. Overview and Summary of Request.

Opponents first wish to clarify an important point noted in the Letter of Intent: the document states that this is a family-owned farm “managed by Steve and Cathy Roscio.” While that

description is accurate, it omits a critical fact relevant to the impact of this request. The Roscios do not reside on the property in question. They have the ability to leave the site and return to a quieter, more insulated part of the neighborhood. In other words, their residence is not personally subjected to the direct noise, traffic, and activity generated by the proposed increase to 225 vehicles.

For those of us whose properties directly border the Farm, the situation is very different. We cannot simply leave the noise behind. The daily and seasonal impacts of this operation—particularly during peak agritainment periods—are felt continuously by the surrounding residents. The Requestors’ ability to retreat to a peaceful home environment means that the consequences of this expansion fall disproportionately on neighbors who have no such escape.

This distinction matters. The proposed increase in intensity may have no bearing on the Requestors’ own quality of life, but it has a profound and unavoidable effect on ours. Those living adjacent to the Farm shoulder the full burden of increased traffic, noise, trespass, and disruption. We respectfully request the Planning Department to weigh this imbalance carefully when evaluating whether the requested expansion is compatible with the surrounding residential community.

2. State and County Support for Agritainment

Opponents acknowledge that the Requestors point to the State of Colorado’s general support for agritainment operations. While that is true, it is equally important to recognize that state-level encouragement does not override local zoning limits, nor does it justify transforming a low-intensity rural property into a high-volume commercial attraction. RR-5 zoning is intended for low-intensity rural uses, not for large-scale event venues drawing hundreds of vehicles at a time. The Requestors’ proposal to increase on-site parking from 50 vehicles to 225 represents a **350% escalation in intensity**—far beyond what the County contemplated when it established the 50-vehicle cap. If the average vehicle holds 3 to 4 people, the increase from 50 cars to 225 cars, increases the attendance from 150 to 200 people respectively, to 675 to 900 people respectively. The number of cars is not the true issue, it is the number of individuals that accompany those cars and the impact on this neighborhood.

The 50-vehicle limit is not arbitrary; it is the County’s regulatory mechanism for ensuring that agritainment remains compatible with rural neighborhoods. It is the tool that keeps agritainment from morphing into commercial entertainment. By requesting a jump to 225 vehicles, the Roscios are effectively seeking to convert a rural agritainment use into a regional attraction, one that is fundamentally incompatible with the surrounding RR-5 properties and the expectations of residents who rely on the protections of this zoning district.

The Requestor’s letter asserts that limiting parking to 50 vehicles would “undermine the Farm’s ability to operate at a commercially sustainable level.” Yet this limitation is entirely consistent with how the Farm was originally conceived and represented. From the outset, the Requestors described this Farm to the community as a small-scale, low-impact operation, one that would integrate into the surrounding area without generating significant traffic, noise, or disruption.

That was their choice. They elected to establish a modest agricultural venture, and they presented it to us in precisely those terms.

3. Parking Request

Parking hundreds of vehicles on dry grass in a wildfire-prone region presents a significant ignition risk.

The Letter of Intent states:

“Overflow parking... utilizes adjacent mowed grass fields.” This is precisely the type of surface that can ignite from hot catalytic converters. Additionally, evacuating 225 vehicles during a wildfire or medical emergency would overwhelm the narrow road network.

In addition, the letter states that overflow parking will occupy *“adjacent mowed grass fields,”* which means that agricultural land is being repurposed—seasonally but substantially—into a large-scale parking lot. This is not a minor operational adjustment; it is a material change in land use function. Grass fields used as parking for hundreds of vehicles cease to function as agricultural land during peak seasons and instead operate as commercial infrastructure.

4. Compliance with 9.3.2 and Access and Traffic

The Letter of Intent asserts that many permitted uses within the RR-5 zoning district “routinely generate vehicle gatherings of comparable or greater magnitude,” citing dairies, farms, kennels, wholesale nurseries, public parks, ranches, religious institutions, tree farms, and agricultural stands. Opponents do not dispute that these uses are permitted; however, it is highly improbable that the majority of these operations would ever host 250 vehicles at one time, much less four days a week for a straight three months. Most of the examples listed are low-traffic, steady-flow uses that do not generate concentrated surges of visitors. They do not function as event-based attractions drawing hundreds of cars within continuous weekend windows.

The Requestors’ comparison is therefore misleading. While these uses may generate traffic over the course of a day, they do not create the event-style peak loads associated with agritainment operations seeking to accommodate 225 vehicles simultaneously. The County’s 50-vehicle cap exists precisely to prevent agritainment from escalating into the type of high-intensity, regional-draw attraction that the Requestors now seek to establish.

In addition, the Requestors state that “all adjacent property owners within 1,000 feet have been notified of this application.” As one of the few property owners whose land directly borders the Farm, I can attest that **we were not notified** prior to or at the time the Letter of Intent was filed. Instead, we received a text message on May 12 informing us that the application had already been submitted. This is not consistent with the spirit of transparency or neighbor engagement that the County expects in Special Use processes.

The bottom line is that the uses cited by the Requestors do not reasonably compare to an agritainment venue seeking to host hundreds of vehicles, and potentially in excess of 750 to 1000

people at once. The proposed intensity is fundamentally inconsistent with the rural character protections outlined in the Master Plan and incompatible with the expectations of residents who rely on RR-5 zoning to preserve peace, privacy, and low-impact land use.

The Requestors state in their Letter of Intent that there have been “no complaints from neighboring properties.” Opponents believe this statement requires context. We fully understand the limitations placed on Fall Mountain Farm and the representations Mr. Roscio has made regarding the operation of this venture. We also understand the reality of living next to it. The truth is simple: complaining about the noise, the screaming, the individuals who pet my animals through my fence on my property, the traffic, or the disruptions does not change anything, and for that reason, we have not chosen to file formal complaints.

As mentioned above, we purchased our property in 2020 specifically because of its remote feel, its quiet nature, and its proximity to the national forest. Those qualities were central to our decision to invest in this location. The Requestors now invite up to 50 cars each fall under the existing allowance, and even that level of activity has fundamentally altered the peaceful character of this land. The noise, the constant flow of visitors, and the disruption to the natural quiet of the area have already eroded the qualities that drew us here. Filing noise complaints or disturbance reports would not restore that peace, so we simply endure it.

However, it is not accurate to suggest that no concerns have ever been raised. I have personally contacted the Requestor every time I have witnessed individuals entering my property, sticking their hands through my fence to pet my animals, or walking along the fence line on land that is clearly no longer part of the Farm. These incidents are not hypothetical—they are recurring, documented intrusions that directly affect my safety, privacy, and property rights.

These are not minor inconveniences. They are the predictable result of an agritainment operation placed immediately adjacent to private residences, without adequate boundaries, signage, or supervision to prevent visitors from wandering into areas where they do not belong. The Requestors’ claim of “no complaints” overlooks the reality that neighbors have repeatedly raised concerns directly, and that many more impacts go unreported simply because residents have learned that complaining does not change the underlying issue or are simply within the confines of the current limits.

The Planning Department should not interpret the absence of formal complaints as evidence of compatibility. Instead, it should recognize that neighbors have already absorbed significant impacts under the current 50-vehicle limit—and that increasing capacity to 225 vehicles would magnify those impacts dramatically.

Regarding the traffic burden, Opponent respectfully disagrees. There is only one point of ingress into this section of the neighborhood, which already creates a natural bottleneck. The additional activity generated by the Requestor’s property further intensifies this congestion.

In addition, the safety concerns associated with the configuration of the Requestor’s entrance present a significant hazard to all drivers traveling southbound on Mt. Herman Lane. Opponent

directs attention to Exhibit A, which illustrates the layout of the Requestor's driveway and the problematic sightlines and turning patterns it creates.

On numerous occasions, we have personally been traveling south on Mt. Herman Lane only to be cut off by vehicles attempting either to enter the Farm (westward) or exit the Farm. Drivers leaving the property frequently disregard the posted stop sign, pulling out abruptly and forcing southbound traffic to brake or swerve to avoid collision.

To further underscore this concern, I no longer allow my children to ride their bikes in the neighborhood on Farm weekends due to the significant safety risks created by the increased traffic entering the area. Many of these drivers do not treat this neighborhood as their own community space; instead, they move through it with little regard for the families who live here and use these roads daily.

Lastly, the dirt roads in this neighborhood simply cannot withstand the level of traffic that a 350% increase in vehicles would generate. The washboarding and surface breakdown have already accelerated noticeably, and each season brings deeper ruts, more dust, and more frequent maintenance needs. Adding hundreds of additional vehicle trips—four days a week, for multiple months—would only intensify the deterioration, creating rougher driving conditions for residents and increasing the long-term maintenance burden on the county.

For the reasons outlined above—traffic safety risks, emergency access concerns, environmental impacts, and over-intensification—I respectfully urge the County to deny the Special Use request to increase on-site parking capacity to 225 vehicles.

The existing 50-vehicle limit is appropriate, intentional, and necessary to protect the safety, welfare, and rural character of the surrounding community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Exhibit A:

