

To the Staff of the City/County Planning Division,

I would first like to say thank you for participating in this meeting and letting the surrounding neighbors' voices be heard. My family and I live on Brohaugh rd in Laurel. Which isn't too far from the projected shooting range that is potentially going to be built off Grandparents Rd. Let me first give you a prospective of our neighborhood. When you first come on to the beautiful drive on River Road, there's the river not far off with amazing trees to show the outline of the river. There are houses, some are off in the distance some are closer to the road. If you look at the houses closely you see jungle gyms for children, you see farmer's fields, cows, horses, and wildlife. Making it such an amazing little drive, windows down in your car enjoying the nice breeze as you make the trip through the winding wide open spaces.

Now that I have that picture in your mind, let's add in what Mr. Cusanek would like to do with our neighborhood. You're driving down the road again with windows down in your car and all you hear are gunshots constantly. Or so much traffic on the road that it doesn't become a nice Sunday drive anymore. Not to mention the hundreds of bicyclists and runners who take this road often due to safety of not much traffic and the scenic route.

Our neighborhood consists of hundreds of acres of farmland, and livestock galore. This is not only our land, but our livelihood at risk. In the County Application that was submitted it stated that fencing will be kept to a minimum for wildlife. (1d. of the application) How do they plan to keep their customers off private property without trespassing? They are planning to introduce walking trails but offer low-impact development with "minimal footprint". (1a.) They plan to use natural materials for berms to deflect bullets from ricocheting rounds that are being shot. On April 1st, 2025, in Logan Montana the McDonnel's petitioned to close State Trust Land with a gun range for public safety, shooting near livestock and stray bullets. They won the petition to permanently. With houses and livestock close by, how can we be sure we can be safe on our own property?

With increased shooting and traffic in our area, there will be no more wildlife in the area. The bonds, memories, and culture the application describes will no longer be our family memories, our culture and our bonds. There are multiple generations of families in the area that go hunting on our private lands creating those memories. There is an abundance of mule deer, whitetail deer, pheasants, families of turkeys and more. With Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks study area of the Ruby Mountain Elk population from April

2020-December 2024. (W-177-R) That population of elk had diminished due to abundance of recreational activities and a shooting range nearby.

Within the last year of hunting, myself and others in the area have had multiple encounters with poachers on our land. How can we ensure with this shooting range being built will stop poachers from the shooting range or livestock being shot with it being a public place? We still have the high school population who like to drive the dirt roads and experience what our area has to offer. Not all the properties surrounding the possible shooting range are fenced, if the shooting range will not be fenced either, how are they going to prevent a possible negligent shot from the shooting range hitting either a person or livestock?

The application states that they will work closely with the emergency departments in our area. The fire department in Laurel is a volunteer fire department. We appreciate them greatly as we have had many close calls in our area with fires due to lightning strikes and farm equipment. On average it takes them anywhere from 14-25 minutes to respond to the fire. Hot rounds from the shooting range mixed with dry grass is asking for fires to spread through our neighborhood quickly. Dry grass fires can spread extremely fast, ranging from 15-20 miles per hour. Our pastures consist of dryland, prairie grass, and wheatfields. The property that the shooting range is potentially being built on is consisting of the same vegetation listed above. Making it a prime fire hazard.

We are asking you to please consider not approving this application for the shooting range. Not only is our neighborhood at risk but our livestock, our farmland and our homes. Our neighborhood always keeps each other in the know, is tightly knit and cares about each other. If this council cares about its Montanans and its traditions, please consider the Montanans in this neighborhood with their traditions.

Thank you,

Ashley Busta