



Town of Erie
Board of Trustees
645 Holbrook
P. O. Box 750
Erie, CO 80516

February 18, 2021

Boulder County Board of County Commissioners
PO Box 471
Boulder, CO 80306

Dear Commissioners:

As the Town of Erie Board of Trustees we are writing to you to share our residents' concerns and our frustration with how Boulder County has handled consideration of the proposed compost facility at the former Rainbow Nursery.

On February 9 at our regularly scheduled Board meeting, we listened to more than 50 residents express serious concerns with the proposal and with Boulder County's lack of engagement with everyone who might be affected by this project. We extended an invitation for County staff to present during that meeting on the current state of the proposal. However, they declined to participate in the meeting because review of the facility's designs has been put on hold and the project team is working to refine the proposal to "mitigate concerns of neighbors and area residents". It is ironic County staff would not want to hear from the public if they want to mitigate concerns.

Our February 9 meeting indicates Boulder County's communication with the public on this proposal has been lacking. Furthermore, the County also failed to engage the Board of Trustees on this proposal before it was fully formed. As a result, the decision to move forward on the former Rainbow Nursery site surprised us as much as it surprised the general public. That is a breakdown in intergovernmental collaboration.

Unfortunately, the lack of public engagement prior to our February 9 Board meeting and failing of County staff to attend the meeting has made residents of Erie and surrounding areas more than just skeptical of this proposal; it has created an environment in which misinformation, rumor, and vitriol flourish. We have heard increasingly distressed residents who need and deserve straight answers on many aspects of the proposal, especially these questions:

- What is the justification for using Open Space funding to acquire agricultural land but then use it for a large-scale industrial operation?
- Exactly what materials are to be processed in the proposed facility?
- How will the County prevent the proposed facility from causing continuous nuisance odors, water contamination, emissions and other negative impacts?
- What is the County's plan to ensure the proposed facility does not exacerbate traffic hazards on U.S. Highway 287, which is already among the most deadly highways in the region?

- What will the County do about the devaluation of nearby homes and private property if you approve this proposal?

The Town of Erie provided a venue for Erie residents to ask these questions and voice their concerns because Boulder County did not provide this opportunity. As the applicant and the approving entity in this unusual case, we would hope your dedication to transparency would be higher.

We know the pandemic has made many things difficult, and we admire Boulder County's collaboration on pandemic related actions, including weekly coordination meetings among relevant staff, economic support for businesses, robust information sharing, and public question and answer sessions. In contrast, we are disappointed and feel disrespected by the County's approach on the compost facility proposal and the watershed evaluation.

To get our government to government relationship back on track, we ask you to formally withdraw the compost facility proposal and to meet with us to review the process through which any similar proposal should be considered.

Although they may diverge in some areas, the Town of Erie's and Boulder County's interests are aligned in many ways. We look forward to meeting with you soon and to identifying specific ways to ensure we coordinate well, resolve disagreements constructively, and serve our residents effectively.

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 Mayor Jennifer Carroll

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 Mayor Pro Tem Adam Haid

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 Trustee Ari Harrison

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 Trustee Sara Loflin

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 Trustee Bill Gippe

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 Trustee Brandon Bell

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 Trustee Christiaan van Woudenberg