



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
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C. H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

October 30, 2003

Todd J. Rathner, Chairman
Arizona Shooting Range Coalition
P.O. Box 86733
Tucson, Arizona 85754

Re: Your Letter Dated October 15, 2003, Regarding the Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility

Dear Mr. Rathner:

We appreciate your letter regarding this matter. It is our hope that Pima County will be in a position to purchase the facility and ask that a non-profit entity operate the facility on our behalf.

We believe that acquisition of this facility and expansion of the Houghton Road facility are absolutely necessary to meet the needs of shooting and hunting enthusiasts in Pima County. We have asked for a County-authorized appraisal of the facility and will be receiving the results of the appraisal in the near future. Once received we will ask the Board of Supervisors to consider acquisition, either directly or conditionally, based on approval of the bond issue, which we believe is essential to complement the Houghton Road facility.

We will also ask that your Coalition and affiliate organizations consider supporting the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. As you know from our presentation to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, the Conservation Plan has nothing to do with and will not regulate game or wildlife in Arizona or Pima County. It is intended for the purpose of containing urban sprawl, which we believe is the greatest threat to continued hunting within Pima County.

We are going to place a resolution before the Board of Supervisors for their consideration. We hope your member organizations can support whatever actions the Board takes regarding an open space component of a May 18, 2004 bond issue as the County has never regulated, nor do we intend to regulate, hunting on County property, even if acquired for open space

Todd Rathner

Your October 15, 2003 Letter Regarding the Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility

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purposes. Acquisition of open space, either through conservation easement or outright purchase, is the most direct way to preserve hunting for future generations of Arizonans and Pima County residents.

Sincerely,



Sharon Bronson, Chair
Pima County Board of Supervisors



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

SB/CHH/jj

- c: The Honorable Members of the Pima County Board of Supervisors
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works
Mike Hein, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Economic Development
Rafael Payan, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Director
Jim Barry, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator
Thomas Moulton, Leased Asset and Promotion Manager



ARIZONA SHOOTING RANGE COALITION
PO BOX 86733 TUCSON, ARIZONA 85754
520-903-1666

October 15, 2003

Mr. Chuck Huckleberry, County Administrator
County Administration Bldg.
130 W. Congress
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Mr. Huckleberry:

The mission of the Arizona Shooting Range Coalition is **to prevent the closure of shooting ranges in Arizona, and to encourage their development statewide.**

The Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facilities, a private facility located at 7777 East Valencia Road, is facing imminent closure due to the personal circumstances of the owner. He has been forced to place the range up for sale. For it to survive it must be purchased with the intent of utilizing it as a shooting range. It would be a great loss to the community to have it bulldozed to clear the way for some other type of business.

This facility is open to the public and provides a safe, modern shooting site for the holders of more than 600 individual and family memberships, **plus thousands more who shoot on a daily fee basis.** In addition to recreational shooting, the Desert Trails range is a principal firearms training facility for U.S. Customs, Veterans Administration Hospital Police, Pima County Adult Probation, Air Force R.O.T.C. and others. The range and the modern air-conditioned classrooms are used for Arizona Certified CCW training and the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Hunter Education classes, as well as numerous youth education classes in gun safety.

Closure of the facility at this time would be detrimental to these programs, and would negatively impact thousands of Pima County's hunters and recreational shooters. Tucson is already experiencing a shortage of outdoor shooting ranges. With hunting season approaching and Pima County's 21,000 licensed hunters needing a place to sight in rifles, closure of the Desert Trails facility will send many of them into the desert.

You are well aware of the situation regarding the Tucson Rod & Gun Club's Sabino Canyon Range. The effort to reopen that range could take significantly more time. The planned (and absolutely essential) Houghton Road range is not scheduled to be operational for up to a year, and it will likely be several years before all of the Houghton Road amenities are in place. While the Desert Trails Range will not fulfill all the needs of Pima County's shooters, it can continue meeting at least some of those needs while at the same time assuring that Pima County will have a great urban firearms training facility well into the future.

The Arizona Shooting Range Coalition requests that Pima County arrange to purchase the facility with County funds and work with the Coalition to keep it in operation. The Coalition will enthusiastically assist the County in arranging to contract out the management of the facility. If managed properly, under contract to a private organization, this range will be self-supporting thus requiring little or no operational expense from the county.

Alternative uses of this property are extremely limited due to its close proximity to the Davis Monthan airfield. It is, therefore, unlikely that removal of the property from the tax base would have any negative revenue impact on the county.

The **Arizona Shooting Range Coalition** looks forward to working with you on this issue to find the best solution for Pima County and the thousands of shooters who reside here.

Sincerely,



Arizona Shooting Range Coalition
Todd J. Rathner, Chairman

Organizations supporting the goals of the ASRC include:

National Rifle Association
Arizona State Rifle & Pistol Association
Arizona Chapter of Safari Club International
National Wild Turkey Federation
Mule Deer Foundation

We will forward the names of the latest coalition members as they join.

CC: Sharon Bronson
Ray Carroll
Richard Elias
Ramon Valadez
Ann Day