COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
130 W. CONGRESS, TUCSON, AZ 85701-1317
(520) 740-8661 FAX (520) 740-8171

C. H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

November 4, 2003

Richard Redpath
Arizona State Chairman
Mule Deer Foundation
1645 West Valencia, Suite 226
Tucson, Arizona 85746

Re: **Your Letter Dated October 29, 2003 Regarding the Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility**

Dear Mr. Redpath:

Thank you for your letter in support of recreational and sport shooting in Pima County. Attached please find letters recently signed by myself and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors regarding this matter. I will recommend to the Board that the Houghton facility be included in the bond issue and, depending on the appraisal of the Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility, we will also recommend that the Board consider acquisition of this property to complement the Houghton facility.

Sincerely,

C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/jj

Attachments

c: The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works
Rafael Payan, Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Director
Jim Barry, Executive Assistant to the County Administrator

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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

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

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER
130 W. CONGRESS, TUCSON, AZ 85701-1317
(520) 740-8661 FAX (520) 740-8171

C. H. HUCKELBERRY
County Administrator

October 30, 2003

Chris W. Cox, Executive Director
NRA-Institute for Legislative Action
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Re: **Your October 20, 2003 Letter Regarding Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility**

Dear Mr. Cox:

Pima County values the many and varied shooting enthusiasts who reside in our state. We absolutely understand the need to provide safe and efficient shooting facilities for our residents to enjoy. We have and will continue to act to preserve the shooting options available to Pima County residents.

Regarding the Desert Trails Gun Club, we believe it has a place in providing comprehensive shooting and training facilities that, when coupled with our future Houghton Road facility, will provide an ideal combination of meeting the needs of all shooting enthusiasts as well as training that is necessary to ensure the safe handling and operation of firearms.

We have requested and will hopefully be receiving soon, a County appraisal of the value of the Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facility with the intent of possibly purchasing the facility to operate in tandem with our Houghton Road facility.

Thank you for your input in this matter.

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

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION
11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD
FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030

NRA

Office of the Executive Director
CHRIS W. COX

October 20, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Huckleberry:

I write in support of the Arizona Shooting Range Coalition and its goal to preserve and expand shooting range facilities in Arizona.

It has come to our attention that a private shooting range facility is facing closure. The Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facilities serves as a safe and accessible shooting site for thousands of Pima County residents, including more than 600 individual and family memberships. This facility has served both the State and the County by acting as a training site for groups such as the Pima County Adult Probation, U.S. Customs, Veterans Administration Hospital police, and others. The classrooms have been used to carry out Arizona Certified CCW training and the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Hunter Education classes.

The County has an opportunity to prevent the closure of this facility and help continue the service that Desert Trails Gun Club has been providing to the thousands of shooting enthusiasts that reside within Pima County. Due to urban sprawl and development the more than 20,000 licensed hunters across the County are finding it increasingly difficult to access safe and affordable shooting facilities. If Desert Trails Gun Club and Training Facilities is not purchased by a buyer with the intent to continue the operation of the shooting range facility, the residents of Pima County will lose a valuable resource that thousands have come to rely on to fulfill their shooting needs.

On behalf of the National Rifle Association and tens of thousands of NRA members living in Arizona, I respectfully request that Pima County consider the purchase of Desert Trails Guns Club and Shooting Facilities with the purpose of keeping it open. Through private contracting the maintenance of this facility would be of little or no cost to the County and could continue to preserve the rich hunting and shooting heritage that Arizonans have grown to love.

It is my hope that the officials of Pima County will do their part to help serve their residents with well managed facilities to accommodate the thousands of residents that enjoy shooting and hunting on a regular basis. To that end, if there is anything we at the NRA can do to help, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Chris W. Cox
Executive Director
NRA-Institute for Legislative Action

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

MULE DEER FOUNDATION
1645 W. Valencia #226 Tucson, Arizona 85746
520-631-3048

10/29/03

Dear Mr. Huckelberry,

I am writing on behalf of our membership to support the efforts of the Arizona Shooting Range Coalition to encourage Pima County to purchase the Desert Trails Shooting Range, and the effort to place 2.5 million dollars in the May 2004 Pima County bond package to finish building the Houghton Road Shooting Range.

Our membership is primarily made up of hunters who need a safe place to sight in their hunting rifles and practice their skills. As an organization dedicated to conservation of our mule deer resource we prefer to use organized shooting facilities rather than informal ranges set up in the desert.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Redpath
Arizona State Chairman
Tucson Chapter Chairman