



STATE OF  
COLORADO

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## OHV Pilot Project for Lake City and Hinsdale County

1 message

Steven [REDACTED] Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 7:27 AM  
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To: Colorado Transportation Commission and Colorado Department of Transportation Representatives

I am writing regarding the Joint Application to CDOT for the OHV Pilot Project for Hinsdale County and Town of Lake City. I am opposed to the extension of this Pilot Project and request that the Transportation Commission reject the application for renewal.

My parents, myself and our families have been vacationing in Lake City for nearly 70 years. My parents and I have owned properties south of Lake City since 1962 and have been summer residents for up to five months for 17 years. Therefore, the [REDACTED] families have been financially supporting local restaurants, lumberyard, grocery stores, contractors, car repair businesses, gas stations, shops, arts center, movie theater and historical society for **many, many decades**. And yet our opinions and desires along with those of numerous other seasonal residents are ignored by local elected officials in deference to the wishes of OHV owners and local businesses

Allow me to address two issues that appear to me to be of primary importance:

### Safety

The Joint Application states: "The safety of highway travel associated with the Pilot Project is the number one priority for all partners involved". Nothing could be further from the truth. Why? Consider the following facts regarding OHV safety:

- OHVs are not certified for use on public roads, paved surfaces or highway environments.
- OHV tires are not certified for highway use.
- OHV manufacturers, operator manuals, and rider safety schools warn against operating OHVs on paved roads, hard-packed surfaces and highway environments.
- OHVs have an inherent instability on paved surfaces due to their drivetrain and locking rear-differential.
- OHVs are not equipped with lights or signaling devices certified for highway use.
- OHVs are not crash-test certified, therefore this Pilot Project endangers public safety by allowing uncertified vehicles to operate on a highway along with crash-test certified vehicles.
- The OHV Safety Coalition is opposed to OHVs operating on paved surfaces.

As succinctly stated by the ATV Safety Institute, "Never ride on paved roads".

Therefore, it is exceedingly clear that OHVs present a known and documented risk to public safety, to their occupants and to others when allowed to operate on paved highways. They are OFF HIGHWAY Vehicles! Given all of these and many other adverse safety issues, why would CDOT approve of and permit OHVs driving on SH 149, which is a key part of the Pilot Project? It is only a matter of time before a serious

accident or death occurs by allowing OHVs on SH 149. The Transportation Commission and CDOT are responsible for public safety. Who will be liable if this project is approved and an accident or death occurs? The Transportation Commission? CDOT? Hinsdale County? Town of Lake City? All of the above?

The Applicants state: "Exponentially more traffic citations are written in the summer..." "Most citations written to OHV drivers... were for driving where prohibited, minors without a helmet and no insurance. Few were written for "hazardous violations". "There were few unsafe traffic conditions...". This is certainly not a situation where "safety is the number one priority" since Lake City and Hinsdale County are requesting a program that creates "exponentially more traffic citations". What were the "hazardous violations"? What were these "unsafe traffic conditions"? How many are "few"? Is safety really the #1 Priority?

### **Impact on Local Economy**

Since safety is certainly not the #1 priority, the true reason for the Pilot Project is to increase business by having more OHV owners in Lake City. The Joint Application states "Allowing OHV riders to complete the Alpine Loop is considered an economic benefit to the Town of Lake City and Hinsdale County due to the increase in the number of visitors to the area." Yet once again, the Applicants have failed to support this claim due to the lack of concrete data. **There is absolutely no direct evidence that the increased number of OHVs has led to an increase in sales tax revenue.** Instead, the only documented cause of increased tax revenue in 2020 was more on-line internet sales.

Another fact the Applicants ignore is that a significant number of seasonal summer residents chose to either not come to Lake City during 2020 or have sold their properties and moved to more pleasant locales due to the disastrous influx of OHVs. These are the people that support the businesses of Lake City for two to six months each summer rather than a week or two typical for OHV owners. And these summer residents have been doing this for DECADES!

The Applicants are proposing additional seasonal law enforcement resources, made possible through increased funding to the Hinsdale County Sheriff's Office. This is because the Sheriff is on-record that his office is unable to manage the increased levels of tourism. The drain on local law resources for increased enforcement is not compensated by an increase in revenue. A key unanswered question is how much increased funding is needed and where will the money come from? Most likely it will come from higher taxes, which will adversely affect summer residents like me. I pay nearly \$2,500 in property taxes each year but cannot vote since I am not a resident of Hinsdale County.

It has been implied that allowing use of OHVs on SH 149 is not linked to increased tourism and potential higher revenue. This is not true. By making it easier to access the Alpine Loop rather than taking their OHVs to parking lots at each end of the Loop, the volume of OHVs in Lake City is and will be higher. **The Lake City Town Trustees and Hinsdale County Commissioners are sacrificing safety for perceived financial profit.**

Given these facts and your focus on highway safety, I strongly encourage you to reject any further implementation, renewal or continuation of the CO 149 Pilot Project for Lake City and Hinsdale County. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven [REDACTED]

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