

February 22, 2023

Kittitas County Community Development
Att: Kelly Bacon
411 Ruby Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Dear Ms. Bacon,

I am writing in regards to CU-0001-23, filed by 3 Boots Ranch.

The Conditional Use Permit process is a generic one, which serves as a catch-all for all types of projects. So, I understand that not all matters in any given project will be addressed by the standard forms and checklists. That said, I feel that given the nature of this project, there are quite a few questions that have been left unanswered, or simply haven't been asked.

Living rurally, we accept some inconveniences that go hand-in-hand with the lifestyle. Things like cattle drives that stop traffic along Wilson Creek Road. What we not so lovingly refer to as "fly season" at our house. The deafening cries of hoarse calves during weaning. Slow rolling tractors taking their half out of the middle of the road, or hay laden trailers peppering your freshly washed car in clippings.

All of these things are a small price to pay for rural living. And, all of these things are temporary. They are seasonal. They are not part of a 365 industry that will create far greater inconveniences for those living nearby.

So, as a resident and business owner on Wilson Creek Rd, I would like to ask the following please:

- 1.) Can you please clarify the number of cattle being processed, is it 200 per day? If so, how are they being transported (i.e. POV, semi, etc.). If the latter, I have serious concerns about semi traffic along this two-lane, rural road.
- 2.) What sales channel is 3 Boots Ranch catering to? Are these individual, small farmers who are delivering 5-10 head at a time and creating several return trips as well to pick up the finished product? Are these commercial suppliers, again, begging the question about semis. And if so, does that generate another semi round trip, or numerous

delivery trucks for business-to-consumer mail order sales? As it stands, we know the cattle go in, but where do they go from there?

- 3.) Also, to the sales channel, who are they making their services available to? Can small, local ranchers and hobby farmers use their services, or are they working with commercial suppliers? Will they be an organic facility, limiting who they will work with?
- 4.) How long will the cattle be held before processing and what systems are in place to address the by-products of having a high number of cattle condensed in one place (i.e. fly control, waste management, noise levels, etc.)?
- 5.) What is the true impact on the local wildlife and what's the ripple affect for farmers and ranchers? On the SEPA checklist under #5 - Animals it asks what wildlife are present and the answer given is, "occasional coyotes in surrounding areas and standard local birds- Starlings etc". While I don't think this answer is malicious at all, it simply isn't an accurate portrayal of Wilson Creek as a whole. The Wilson Creek area has several large, mature deer populations. We have a herd of five to six that call our farm home throughout the year. We have also had a resident black bear and most recently, a confirmed cougar. In speaking with Fish and Wildlife about the cougar presence, we were told that Wilson Creek is a known cougar habitat. Finally, we see no less than 50-60 bald eagles and other birds of prey move in each year to take advantage of calving season. Even if mitigated for humans, a slaughterhouse will no doubt create a lure for prey animals. And when it does, where does that leave the surrounding producers?
- 6.) If you've ever had the pleasure of participating in a cattle drive or branding day, you know that pushing a large number of cattle into a confined space creates an uncontrollable level of noise. How will that ongoing noise be mitigated?
- 7.) How will the holding pen waste be mitigated? The Wilson Creek area deals with high water tables, seasonal flooding and there is a creek adjacent to the property as well. What is the impact of the holding pens on that water?
- 8.) Will existing Open Range protections, created to protect ranchers practicing traditional animal management methods, be afforded to 3 Boots Ranch?
- 9.) How will the slaughter waste be disposed of? Are there plans to incinerate? If so, what is the impact on air quality? If hauling away, how will the smell and the pests be addressed before hauling. And, if hauling, is the fire department prepared to respond to a bio-hazard spill of that nature? Additionally, is the county ready to respond should an incident occur that creates a spill within our waterways?
- 10.) And, a question for the county, who regulates an industry like this within our farmlands? Who's watching when 200 cattle become 500? When the regular work week adds a night shift? When the proposed traffic doubles, then triples?

To be clear, this is not agriculture. This is industry.

Agriculture is simply defined as "the practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products".

Industry is defined as, an “economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories”.

A meat packing facility that operates 300 +/- days a year, mass processing the “raw materials” of 200 cattle per day in order to “manufacture” a finished product for wholesale, retail, mail-order sales is a factory, in our rural farmlands.

As the county moves through this process, please keep these two definitions in mind.

Thank you for the time and opportunity to comment and ask additional questions.

Sincerely,

Hilary Jensen
6181 Wilson Creek Rd.