

Ysaura Rodriquez

From: GARY VELLA [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, June 16, 2023 4:31 PM
To: COB_mail
Subject: Potential renewal of horse racing contract with RRI.
Attachments: Position statement regarding horse racing.docx

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Pima County Board Of Supervisors:

I am contacting you today regarding agenda item #53 for next Tuesday's BOS meeting. On that day, renewal of Pima County's existing contract with Rillito Racing Incorporated will be considered, and hopefully, denied. As an animal protection organization based in Tucson with a long history of addressing animal abuse in our community, we have a considerable interest in the removal of Rillito Park Racetrack. I have included our position statement on this issue as an attachment to this e-mail.

To offer a few specifics that are not addressed in our position statement, it should be mentioned that there is a marked similarity between dog racing, which Arizona finally outlawed in 2016, and horse racing, which languishes on today despite the obvious problems that the industry --- and even more so, each equine victim --- has experienced. Although horse racing has been historically glamorized much more than dog racing, the two animal-abusive "sports" have a parallel path in terms of injury and death to the involuntary participants. As with dog racing, those components of the industry cannot be separated from the activity. Why then, would we be so concerned about dogs that we would ban that industry, while ignoring the fate of horses that are put into the same situation? Are we slower to come to the realization that horses need equal protection?

The other specific that cannot be ignored is the heightened probability that horses who sustain leg injuries at the track face on-site euthanasia due to the nature of their anatomy. That was not the case, however, with racing dogs as their legs could better withstand injury and usually did not require a fatal response.

There are many other considerations, many of which have been forwarded your way in recent days, but I would also like to suggest --- as others have in recent years --- that our community would be better served with a more respectable use of Rillito Park property, just as the City of South Tucson is better off with the removal of Tucson Greyhound Park. We would welcome additional space at Rillito for soccer fields and other sports where participants compete voluntarily as true athletes ... not as pawns of an outdated industry.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

In harmony,

Gary Vella
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*Let the smallest cry in
the universe be heard.*

SPEAK

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On the subject of horse racing and the related death toll that is all too prevalent in the industry, our organization's position is clear. For as long as there are those who will exploit animals for profit and are willing to accept ensuing fatalities as inevitable in that pursuit, on-track and off-track casualties will continue.

These equine deaths are unacceptable at any level, particularly when caused by an entertainment event in which they should not be compelled to perform. Indeed, the only sure way to eliminate the needless deaths of these magnificent horses is to abolish the animal-abusive industry that perpetuates the potentially lethal activity.

Horse racing in the U.S. parallels the nearly-defunct dog racing industry, where illicit drug use, substandard care for the animals, and hyper-scheduling only exacerbate an already dangerous racetrack activity. Out of genuine concern for the well-being of the dogs involved, our nation's citizenry has finally put protection of the dogs above any self-serving need for entertainment. When those who purport to care about horses finally accept the reality that there is no horse racing without numerous fatalities, perhaps then we can turn our backs on this animal-abusive industry as well. The mortality rate simply cannot be removed from the activity.

Gary Vella --- President