

62300 Saturn Street
Joshua Tree, CA 92252
April 19, 2026

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
Dawn Rowe, Chair
c/o Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
385 N. Arrowhead Ave, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415

Re: PROJ-2023-00023; Appeal from Approval of Conditional Use Permit to Establish a 12-Site Dry Campground; David Lee and Joseph Milburn, Applicants; Property Address: 62076 Mercury Drive, Joshua Tree, CA 92252; APN: 0631-201-68

Dear Chair Rowe and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Please accept this letter as my notice of appeal from the San Bernardino County Planning Commission's approval of a conditional use permit and related permits and findings at the April 9, 2026 Commission meeting with respect to the project identified above. The proposed project would result in an unstaffed, 12-site, around-the-clock commercial campground sitting squarely in the middle of a rural residential neighborhood in the Homestead Valley community, zoned Rural Living (RL).

I am a property owner immediately adjacent to the proposed campground site. My property sits to the east and north of the site, my home immediately to the east. I participated in the below proceedings by way of several objection letters, as did many of my neighbors. In fact, the underlying record will show that all adjacent and nearby neighbors registering comments with the Planning Commission with respect to the proposed project were unanimous in their opposition to the project. Like the applicants themselves, those writing in favor of the project are not local to it.

The Planning Commission erred by approving the conditional use permit and related permits and findings for a number of reasons antithetical to the facts presented to it and to the county Development Code and other applicable legal regulations. The Commission, respectfully, did not adequately consider the project's impact on noise, property values, trespass, the fragile high desert landscape so carefully cultivated and preserved by me and those in this rural neighborhood, and general nuisances *already brought about by the campground* that the

applicants have built without permits. In the face of genuine, observation-based and publicly known concerns vocalized by the neighborhood and other opponents over the applicants' inability to address and tamp down the nuisances they have created and would further be pushing onto this rural neighborhood, the Commission exchanged its blessing for little more than the applicants' self-serving statements about their lack of knowledge of the nuisance activities.

More specifically, the Planning Commission erred (among other reasons to be further identified) because:

- The Commission relied on the applicants' conclusory statement in response to one commissioner's direct question that "absolutely" no camping activity has occurred on the property since the applicants purchased it. This response was an utter falsehood, as the publicly available and photographic evidence will show conclusively.
- It found no inadequacy within the applicants' proposals to mitigate noise disturbances and other nuisances at a 24/7/365 campground merely by imposing rules, found in the online booking process, that could scarcely be legitimately enforceable without true onsite supervision.
- It found no inadequacy within the applicants' proposals to mitigate noise disturbances by the erection of a *fence previously erected*, which emphatically does not mitigate existing noise disturbances already coming from the site, as observed and documented by the many neighbors who offered comments to the Commission.
- The conditions the Commission imposed on the campsite failed to address the applicants' observed, documented history of unapproved development, neglect over people's use of guns onsite, lack of local oversight, and trespass onto my and neighboring properties.
- It relied on a flawed staff analysis of the project site. For instance, the staff analysis identified the campground site as "currently vacant." Since shortly after the landowner purchased the project site, the evidence will show the property has been developed and occupied with metal storage structures and tents—often multiple tents at a time—which have given rise to all the neighbors' complaints leading to this point.
- Additionally, the Commission relied on the staff report indicating that "[t]he areas of disturbed land [on the site] are primarily the result of internal circulation of vehicles on established paths." While the applicants described their vehicular use onsite and their grading activity as merely a railroad tie being dragged by a truck or a post-hole digger, the documented evidence reflects they have used heavy machinery onsite to perform grading and other work since shortly after taking ownership. Therefore, the Commission relied on unreliable statements by the staff and untrue statements by the applicants.
- Despite at least one commissioner acknowledging that this was "our test case," the Commission failed to retain any oversight over the applicants' compliance with the

conditional use permit, as the Commission is permitted to do, in derogation of the interests of the genuinely concerned neighbors and other parties.

Any proposed conditional use must be in the best interest of public convenience and necessity and may not be contrary to the public health, morals, or welfare. It was the applicants' responsibility to show here that the proposed 24/7/365 campsite would be compatible with the requirements and aspirations of the Development Code, would be essential or desirable to the public convenience and welfare within this Rural Living neighborhood, and would not impair the integrity and character of the neighborhood or be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals or welfare. Either the Commission did not put the applicants to that test, or the applicants have roundly failed it.

Indeed, by not accepting the testimony and written submissions of those occupying and wholly invested in the neighborhood—myself and my neighbors—with anything more than a shrug, and by overlooking the numerous inconsistencies between the applicants' submissions and statements and the actual history of their unapproved development of the site, its use as a campsite all along, and their lack of stewardship and neighborly behavior at the site to date, the Commission has now given its imprimatur to a project already off to the absolute wrong start in this fragile area that stands to be protected, not overrun. The Commission's decision merits your review and your reversal.

I will supplement this letter with evidence and testimony prior to and at the hearing of this matter, as is permitted by the Development Code. Until then, for myself and the many people who stand to suffer from the Planning Commission's error, I thank you for your careful consideration of this appeal.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Wendy Wacker

Wendy Wacker