To: El Paso County Parks Department March 11, 2022

As a local non-profit organization, the Pikes Peak Pickleball Association (PPPA) prides itself in partnering with our government parks departments. We have signed cooperative agreements with both the Colorado Springs Parks & Recreation (CSPR) and the El Paso County Parks (EPCP) departments. We maintain a public and private relationship with both organizations that is mutually beneficial to your department, our PPPA members, as well as that of the general public. We coordinate with CSPR and EPCP to conduct our many programs, ensuring equal time for our members and the general public to share and enjoy the beautiful facilities which we have partnered with you to help finance. The benefits have been tremendous and extremely popular with the local pickleball community. PPPA has over 1,400 current members, and continues to grow daily. With this type of growth and popularity of the sport of pickleball, we have witnessed maximum usage on a daily basis at both Monument Valley Park (MVP), a 15-court lighted facility, and Bear Creek Park, a 12-court facility whose lighting is pending. The usage includes both PPPA members and non-members who typically fill all available courts. As a result, a process was put in place to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy the facilities. We call these “Paddle Up” systems, which are utilized to rotate players for equitable court time.

Our concern with allowing a 7-day tournament that utilizes both facilities would greatly reduce, or eliminate, the opportunity to play pickleball for non-tournament, local players that week. For some, pickleball is their only exercise. In addition, many families play at Bear Creek Park and this impacts time with their kids for one week during prime, summertime pickleball play.

PPPA requests keeping Bear Creek pickleball courts open and available for our local community during the week of the Great Plains Regional Tournament. Since the MVP facility has lights, organizers can run the tournament for up to 14 hours a day. If you assume 0800-2200 hours of operation (14 hours) with a game averaging 15 minutes, 56 games per day can be played on each court. With 15 MVP courts, GPR can accommodate 840 games per day. Over a 7-day tournament, upwards of 5,880 games can be played. For comparative purposes, 519 games were played for the 3-day “Pikes Peak or Bust” tournament held at Bear Creek last year. With proper planning and scheduling, GPR should easily be able to complete all their games at an MVP-only venue.

It has been erroneously suggested that a single Colorado Springs pickleball tournament event could generate $5 million in Economic Benefit for our area. PPPA and the VisitCOS developed a partnered Economic Benefit model in 2014-2016. Based on this proven tool validated by VisitCOS, we ran the model as a reference point for a major 3-day 450-player tournament, assuming an average cost of an overnight stay of $168 per room (based on 2018 VisitCOS data inflated to 2022), with 30% day visitors and local players (not over-nighters), using data for number of overnight stays documented from previous pickleball tournaments and the percentage of friends and family who accompany players. In order to generate an estimated $5M in Economic Benefit:

▪It would take 9.8, 3-day tournaments (that equates to over 29 days of tournament operations)

▪It would involve over 4,400 pickleball players (450-players x 9.8, 3-day tournaments)

▪It would involve committing ALL pickleball court resources at Monument Valley Park, Bear Creek Park, and other locations to absorb the equivalent of 29 days of tournament operations

▪It would be unrealistic to assume any kind of sustained local volunteer support essential to effectively manage such an event in multiple simultaneous locations

▪It would require multiple on-site tournament administrative teams

▪It would lead to a negative perception of CSPR and EPCP by the many local, non-tournament players prevented from using public pickleball courts during tournament play

▪As a comparison, the 450-player "Colorado Open--Pikes Peak or Bust" pickleball tournament hosted and managed by PPPA, in partnership with the tournament organizer US Senior Pickleball (USSP), scheduled for September 9-11, 2022, will yield $508,000 in Economic Benefit to Colorado Springs/El Paso County

▪As a further comparison, between 2012 and 2018, the Pikes Peak or Bust, Great Plains Regional, Colorado Senior Games and Colorado State Games pickleball tournamants only generated an estimated $3M combined in Economic Benefit to Colorado Springs over 7 years

On behalf of the community of pickleball players who do not participate in tournaments, PPPA asks that El Paso County refrain from allowing this tournament to utilize Bear Creek pickleball courts. This would hinder the thousands of local community players from enjoying a sport that for many has become a passion. Based on current Great Plains Regional tournament registrations, PPPA has approximately 90 players participating. There will be another 1,310 PPPA members and thousands of other family and community players expecting to play pickleball during this 7-day period in June at the beautiful Bear Creek Park facility.

The PPPA Board is willing to discuss this further with whomever is the El Paso County decision authority. As the first and largest pickleball association within the state of Colorado, PPPA strongly recommends that reserving our community’s two largest, public pickleball facilities simultaneously for tournament play should not be allowed now, or at any time in the future.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors, Pike Peak Pickleball Association