



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN PEACE
AND JUSTICE CENTER**

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**BOULDER CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS SHUT OUT PUBLIC
INVOLVEMENT TO RUSH DECISION TO BUILD A MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAIL
AROUND ONE OF THE MOST CONTAMINATED NUCLEAR WEAPONS SITES IN
THE COUNTRY**

Community members in Boulder City and County are deeply concerned about the Boulder City Council and County Commissioners' process to introduce the Rocky Mountain Greenway, a proposed mountain biking trail intended to encircle Rocky Flats, one of the most contaminated former nuclear weapons sites in the country. This project would potentially expose thousands or even hundreds of thousands of bicyclists, potentially even pregnant women and children, to plutonium and other hazardous waste such as americium, beryllium, and radioactive lead. While one would imagine that a decision of this magnitude would require public input prior to being passed, the Boulder City and County governments have taken every step to exclude the public in this decision, and to rush the decision forward with very little public information or input.

On Tuesday, April 6th, the Boulder County Commissioners voted 2-1 to pass the Intergovernmental Agreement to Fund the Rocky Mountain Greenway, committing the county to contributing \$90,000 in funding for this project. To our best knowledge, the public hearing on April 6th was publicly announced only 3 days prior, over an Easter holiday weekend. Furthermore, the "public hearing" did not allow for any verbal public testimony prior to the decision. Members of the public were only allowed to submit written comments beforehand, which were hardly addressed during the meeting. Commissioner Loachamin even said during the meeting that, while she requested verbal testimony during this public hearing, the Chief of Staff made the decision to not allow public testimony on this particular issue.

The county also attempted to misrepresent the number of emails sent to them and disqualify demands for a balanced study session because they were "not about the specific topic at hand."

In the week prior to the Boulder County Commissioners' decision, members of the public sent an estimated 90 emails to Boulder County Commissioners, urging them to endorse a balanced study session featuring experts from the public who could voice the health risks of plutonium exposure. The Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center (RMPJC), a Boulder-based nonprofit that focuses on local nuclear weapons issues, also submitted a sign-on letter to the Boulder County Commissioners signed by 2 elected officials, 61 organizations, and 322 individuals, urging them to withdraw from the funding agreement. This letter was never mentioned during the hearing.

One week later, on April 13th, the Boulder City Council held a similar meeting prior to making their decision to commit \$95,000 of public funds to the Rocky Mountain Greenway Intergovernmental Agreement. Despite 119 letters sent to Boulder City Council members asking for a balanced study session featuring expert voices from the public, the item was listed in "matters" during a "special meeting" in order to explicitly avoid a public hearing or discussion on the issue. In fact, Boulder Chief Policy Advisor, Carl Castillo, is documented in an email saying "the one thing we don't want...is for this to become a public hearing item, which would mean a change in our approach as offering it merely as an update."

The Boulder City Council also received a letter from the RMPJC signed by 2 elected officials, 61 organizations, and 325 individuals, urging them to withdraw from the Rocky Mountain Greenway Intergovernmental Agreement. Regardless of the public outcry on this issue, on April 13th, with no public input allowed, the Boulder City Council gave Boulder City Staff direction to move forward with the Intergovernmental Agreement.

For a project that risks exposing so many members of the public to plutonium and other hazardous nuclear waste, and an issue that has received so much public scrutiny over the past several decades, it is deeply concerning that the Boulder City Council and Boulder County Commissioners so blatantly shut out public involvement in order to rush through a project to build a mountain biking trail around one of the most contaminated nuclear weapons sites in the country.

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Quotes:

"Lasting impacts of plutonium exposure include cancer, immune deficiencies, birth defects, and a wide array of other health problems. The threat to public health, safety and welfare from promoting recreation at Rocky Flats far exceeds any benefit that the new recreation site would offer."

“As a Boulder County taxpayer, I do not want public funds put towards a mountain biking trail that risks exposing many thousands of people, including children and pregnant women, to plutonium and other radioactive materials known to cause cancer and birth defects”

“There are many places that city and county governments could build a mountain biking trail. Why are they choosing to put one around an EPA Superfund site?”

“The public narrative around Rocky Flats has been shaped by the Department of Energy, the government department that committed the environmental violations at Rocky Flats to begin with, for far too long. For months, Boulder County residents called on the Boulder County Commissioners and Boulder City Council to hold a fair and balanced study session on the Rocky Mountain Greenway, featuring experts from the community who could speak to public concerns regarding the dangers of recreation at Rocky Flats. The decisions to move forward with the project, however, were made while explicitly excluding public input.”

“Community members in Boulder were never asked if they wanted their tax dollars put towards a mountain biking trail on a highly contaminated former nuclear weapons plant. If we had been asked, our governments would have heard a resounding “NO.” “

“The Broomfield City Council and the Superior Board of Trustees both withdrew from the Rocky Mountain Greenway Intergovernmental Agreement, due to concerns regarding public health, safety, and welfare. We asked that the Boulder City Council and County Commissioners follow the same precautionary principle, and withdraw from the Rocky Mountain Greenway Intergovernmental Agreement to protect public health and safety.”

Quote Credit:

Giselle Herzfeld, Staff, Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center

Chris Allred, Administrator, Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center

Resources:

[Sign-On Letter submitted to Boulder County Commissioners](#)

[Sign-On Letter submitted to Boulder City Council Members](#)

[Text of Letter Submitted by 119 Community Members to Boulder City Council and County Commissioners Demanding a Balanced Study Session](#)

[Email from Carl Castillo Regarding Boulder City Council Agenda Item from CORA Request](#)

[City of Boulder Agenda Item: Update on City Plans to Move Forward with Prior Commitments to Collaborate with Regional Partners for Construction of Rocky Mountain Greenway Connectors](#)

[Boulder County Commissioners Agenda Packet: Intergovernmental Agreement for Funding of Rocky Mountain Greenway Trail Crossings through the Federal Land Access Program](#)

[Video of Boulder County Commissioners Meeting on the Greenway IGA \(around time-mark 1:21:56, Commissioner Loachamin discusses the decision to not allow public comment\)](#)