



426 Saint Joseph Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

605-342-0429 (o)
605-342-0463 (f)

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The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association (SDSGA) Board of Director's recently decided to oppose the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (GF&P) proposed firearms range complex. The proposed complex lies just north of Rapid City on Elk Vale Road in Meade County.

The SDSGA has strong policy condemning the removal of land from production agriculture which can have a detrimental effect on the local tax revenue and the economy. SDSGA's policy states they will, "actively and adamantly oppose state, federal, or other governmental agency's purchase and/or acquisition of private lands, including lands from non-governmental organizations or NGO's."

The proposed sight for the firearms range complex in southern Meade County is currently owned by the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation, an NGO based in Pierre. Not only are the Stockgrowers concerned about taking land out of production and off the tax rolls, but local landowners are also concerned that plans include building across a section line which could affect access to their property. Additionally, folks are concerned with the lack of planning for access to the firearms complex itself. Currently, the only access to the proposed \$10 million facility would be via gravel roads. With the heavy increases in traffic that is sure to come with such a facility, local residents are left with many questions on how these issues will be addressed.

The facility will be paid for by a combination of funding sources. Currently House Bill 1049 which would appropriate \$2.5 million from the State's general fund and earmark an additional \$2.5 million from the GF&P annual budget is scheduled to be debated in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday, 1/25. The remaining funds will be raised through private donations.

The South Dakota Stockgrowers encourage everyone to contact their legislators to voice their concerns with HB 1049 and the proposed government acquisition of private agricultural lands.

You can find contact information for your legislators at:
<https://sdlegislature.gov/Legislators/Contacts/64>