

February 23, 2026

Attn: Eagle County Commissioners
Eagle County
500 Broadway
Eagle, CO

Dear Commissioners,

Subject: *Opposition to Requested Variance from Eagle County Dual-Access Road Requirements – Berlaimont Project*

On behalf of the Vail Town Council, we write to express our opposition to the requested variance from Eagle County's dual-access road requirement for the Berlaimont development.

The County's dual-access standard exists to protect public safety and ensure reliable emergency response and evacuation routes for residential communities in mountain environments. This requirement reflects long-standing recognition that single-access developments create elevated risk during wildfire, severe winter conditions, accidents, and other emergencies that may block or compromise a single road. For this reason, the standard has been a critical component of Eagle County's land-use regulations.

Granting a variance to this requirement for the Berlaimont project would undermine the purpose of this safety standard and expose future residents, emergency responders, and surrounding communities to unnecessary risk.

Public Safety and Emergency Access

The Berlaimont proposal would rely on a single access road serving a substantial new residential development located in steep, forested terrain. In mountain communities like ours, road blockages from wildfire, avalanches, fallen trees, vehicle accidents, or severe winter conditions are not hypothetical risks—they are well-documented and ever-increasing realities.

Without a secondary access route, any disruption along the sole road could delay emergency response or restrict evacuation during critical events. As wildfire risk and extreme weather events increase across the region, redundancy in access routes becomes even more essential. Allowing this development to proceed without meeting the County's dual-access requirement would reduce system resilience precisely when communities must be strengthening it.

In our view, the public safety objectives of the County's access standards cannot be met without compliance with the dual-access requirement.

Purpose of the Variance Process

Variances are intended to address unique physical constraints or hardships while preserving the intent of adopted regulations. In this case, the requested variance would effectively waive a fundamental public safety requirement rather than provide a minor adjustment.

Approving this request would signal that large-scale developments may proceed without meeting one of Eagle County's most important safety standards, which risks creating a precedent that could weaken the County's ability to enforce similar requirements for future developments.

Environmental and Community Impacts

The Berlaimont access road(s) and the development itself would introduce additional environmental impacts in a landscape that provides one of the most important remaining wildlife habitat and movement corridors in the Eagle Valley. Elk, deer and numerous other species in the Eagle Valley have already suffered irreparable population declines. Road construction and associated development fragment habitat, increase wildlife-vehicle conflicts, and introduce long-term disturbance from traffic, lighting, and human activity.

Road construction and residential development in steep mountain terrain also present risks to nearby streams and downstream water quality. Vegetation removal, grading, and increased impervious surfaces can elevate sediment, nutrient, and pollutant runoff during both construction and long-term operation. In mountain watersheds, even relatively small increases in erosion and stormwater runoff can degrade aquatic habitat, impair water quality, and increase flood risk downstream.

While these environmental impacts are concerning on their own, they underscore the importance of ensuring that any development in such sensitive areas meets the County's full set of safety and infrastructure requirements. Granting a variance in this context would allow both increased environmental disturbance and reduced infrastructure resilience.

Conclusion

Eagle County's dual-access requirement exists to safeguard residents, emergency responders, and the broader community. The Berlaimont proposal does not meet this standard, and the requested variance would undermine the purpose of the regulation while introducing unnecessary public safety risks.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Board of County Commissioners to deny the requested variance and uphold the County's established access requirements.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter and for your continued commitment to protecting public safety and responsible land-use planning in Eagle County.

With gratitude for your consideration,

Barry Davis, Mayor
On behalf of the Vail Town Council