



May 19th, 2022

Christina Price

Lake County CA District 4 Planning Commissioner

255 N. Forbes Street, Lakeport, CA 95453

Dear Ms. Price,

This letter is in support of the Ripe Choice Farm & Catering, located at 2550 Soda Bay Road, in Lakeport. Ripe Choice contributes significantly to our community, through the hosting of charitable events, supporting the local Farmer's Market and Agricultural community, employing local residents, and providing educational outreach.

My wife and I are neighbors of Mark and Tammy Lipps, owners of the Ripe Choice Farm & Catering, and we have attended many events at their Farm, including the recent "Hot Ones" non-profit fundraising event, which took place on April 30th, 2022. For this most recent event, I volunteered my time to assist Mark Lipps with parking for the event. I arrived at the Ripe Choice Farm at approximately 4:00 p.m. on April 30th, 2022. Mark showed me the parking locations on his property. He also told me that all cars were to be parked on property and that no cars were to be allowed to park on Soda Bay Road. Additional parking was available on the neighbor's property. This is the same parking arrangement that I have experienced at every event my wife and I have attended at the Ripe Choice Farm.

The 2022 "Hot Ones" event ended around 8:00 pm. I left the event at approximately 8:20 p.m. At the time of my leaving, there were less than 15 people at the Ripe Choice Farm, most of whom were cleaning up after the event. Previous events which we have attended have all ended between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm. At no time have we heard loud music or noise originating from their property past 10:00 pm. That said, we have heard on many occasions loud music from both the Casino and the local Grange well past 10:00 pm. Mark and Tammy Lipps are conscientious of their neighbors and diligent in maintaining the best possible relationships in our neighborhood.

As you are no doubt aware, Mark and Tammy are active members of Lake County's Agricultural Community. They, along with us at Edenberry Farm, and three other Big Valley Farms, host the Big Valley Small Farm tour each Spring and Fall. This event is free and open to the public. Their efforts and outreach draw people from hundreds of miles away to our area to stay and enjoy all that our beautiful county has to offer. Agritourism is an important source of revenue for our county, and Mark and Tammy are at the forefront of this tourism program.

Mark and Tammy represent Lake County's hospitality, generosity and community spirit. We hope the Department of Planning will continue to allow and encourage Mark and Tammy's efforts in the community.

Regards,



Mike and Pauline Edenholm

Edenberry Farm

## Jim Feenan

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**From:** Mark Burch <markthewinemaker@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 12, 2022 1:15 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter; Mary Darby  
**Cc:** Trish Turner; Michael McGinnis  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] UP 22-13

Hello All,

I am reminding you all that a copy of the staff report on UP-22-13 is absolutely going to be necessary from CDD. I have experienced a silence from your department since my first complaint filed on this matter in November of 2021 with the exception of Eric Porter last week when I requested the staff report.

I am now requiring that a copy of a permit that I understand was issued to Ripe Choice at 2550 Soda By Road for 1 to 3 events. It is imperative that I receive a copy of this permit, if it exist, ASAP. If it does not exist, then today 5/12/22, Ripe Choice will be in violation, yet again, of operating without a permit, and this time they are hosting a State organization, CAWG.

It has been brought to my attention that Mark Lipps is circulating material defaming my wife Laurie DeLeon, and myself in regards to this matter. I have read the circulating emails. They are disgusting and absolutely without merit or truth. They are attempting to gather mob mentality to verbally accost us and gang up on us during the public hearing scheduled for 5/26/22. I was informed by my employer that they were verbally accosted on 5/9/22 at a public forum by Mr. Lipps by holding them (my employer), and their business accountable for CDD's pending recommendation for denial of UP-22-13 because I'm an employee of there's. They are implying that this matter is a personal matter, simply a neighbor complaint, and that my wife and I are manufacturing false information to stop the permit from being granted.

First and foremost, I assure you that this is NOT a neighbor complaint. This is a matter of defending Prime Farm Land and ALL of the documented verbiage that has been adopted by the State Of California, as well as by the confirming verbiage adopted by the BOS of The County of Lake. This is about protecting Prime Lake County Farm Land, as well as an existing Wildlife Conservation Easement that exists in the vicinity. You will witness this in my formal written opposition to UP-22-13 that will clearly outline our stance. I cannot draft this narrative until I have received the necessary documents that I have requested.

In regards to the false narrative that Mr. Lipps is spreading about my wife and I, Laurie and I offer this:

- 1) We have followed the County protocols to submit official complaints to Code Enforcement/CDD.
- 2) We have been concise in our information.
- 3) We have submitted 5 complaints beginning 11/9/21, but the unpermitted events have been taking place for over two years.
- 4) We have thorough documentation to support our observations.
- 5) We have NEVER lied or embellished our reports.
- 6) We have NEVER been contacted by CDD/Code Enforcement with the exception of one automated email response stating Ripe Choice would be investigated and we would be informed of the result of that investigation. We never received a response.
- 7) Most notably, we have NEVER come into the County offices with any demands, or threats, or exhibited any unprofessionalism, even in the face of being stonewalled. We have continued our path of professionalism. Even when guests of Ripe Choice verbally accosted us with profane language and disrespect.
- 8) We will continue to be professional and not engage Mark Lipps even though we are frustrated and now being attacked by him in our community as he attempts to defame us.
- 9) Ultimately Ripe Choice and Mark Lipps are the ones who have defiantly, and blatantly violated county by laws, possibly falsified documents to obtain a temporary permit for limited events, been untruthful with our elected officials, and unapologetic for any of their violations resulting in a stance that they are entitled to do as they please.

Please recognize our professional efforts and send us the information we are requiring,

Mark Burch  
Laurie DeLeon

On Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 01:39:46 AM PDT, Mary Darby <mary.darby@lakecounttyca.gov> wrote:

Eric is this the same project as ripe choice?

Sent from my iPhone

On May 6, 2022, at 7:56 AM, Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecounttyca.gov> wrote:

Good morning Mr. Burch,

I'll send the staff report to you as soon as it is cleared internally and available to the Planning Commissioners. This typically occurs the Friday prior to the hearing, which is scheduled for May 26.

Right now my recommendation is for 'denial' based on other complaints on events that have already (legally) taken place.

Thanks,

Eric Porter

**From:** Mark Burch [mailto:markthewinemaker@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 5, 2022 2:01 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecounttyca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] UP 22-13

Dear Mr. Porter,

My Name is Mark Burch and my wife's name is Laurie DeLeon. I'm requesting a staff report for File # UP 22-13.

I have submitted 5 complaint reports to Code Enforcement in the last 5 months and not heard back from your department on a single complaint. I submitted a letter to Mary Darby and received an automated email claiming that my complaints would be investigated and I would be notified of the results. I DID NOT hear back from Code Enforcement on the investigation and the events continue to take place at 2550 Soda Bay Road. I have documented all of the events since Oct 2021 and have documentation of my filed complaints. We are going to have plenty to say on this matter, and we are willing, and able to go as far as we need to to shut this venue down once and for all. We are also going to offer proof that the existing permit should be revoked with prejudice due to the gross negligence of the occupants.

Please send me a Staff Report ASAP to allow us time to prepare our opposition.

Thank You,

Mark Burch

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** Jackie Balestra <jackiebalestra@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:25 AM  
**To:** Dist4 PlanningComm; Mary Darby; Eric Porter; Mark Lipps  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

Hi,

I'm from Redondo Beach and have been receiving Mark Lipps' newsletter for years. Since he and Tammy have moved to LC, I've enjoyed reading about that part of the state and all there is to do. My husband and I are currently planning to take an RV trip there - all because of Mak's newsletter. He's been such a cheerleader for his new home and their business looks wonderful. We can't wait to visit!

Jackie Balestra  
[jackiebalestra@gmail.com](mailto:jackiebalestra@gmail.com)  
310-418-6851

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** Megan Andrus <megan@andrusagency.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:13 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter; Mary Darby  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

Hello, Mary and Eric -

We, the Kelseyville Business Association board, are writing to express our strong support of Mark and Tammy Lipps of Ripe Choice Farm & Catering in regards to the Zoning Permit hearing set for May 26th.

Since the Lipps purchased the property at 2550 Soda Bay Road in 2020 and moved to Lake County they have been nothing short of outstanding and involved community members who care deeply about the county and its members. Not only do they donate financially to local organizations and charities, but they also allow nonprofits to utilize their event space free of charge, spend countless hours volunteering their time to plan and host charity events, and serve as vocal and passionate Lake County ambassadors to their southern California network and beyond.

Every event the Lipps lend their time to or host is first class and showcases our beautiful county in the best light. As such, their reputation is sterling and brings in people from all over the state that might otherwise look to our wine country neighbors to the south. We can all agree that tourism is a major component in bringing money into Lake County, and that businesses who substantially strengthen that offering should be supported.

Not only does the Ripe Choice Farm bring dollars and tourists to the county, but they have made it a point to hire all local staff, purchase produce and goods from local farmers whenever possible, as well as frequently put their money back into the community.

This is a business that has quickly become an important part of what makes Lake County so special, and to revoke their permit would not only be devastating to them, but would be detrimental to our community as a whole.

Respectfully,

Kelseyville Business Association

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** Mark Burch <markthewinemaker@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 5, 2022 2:01 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] UP 22-13

Dear Mr. Porter,

My Name is Mark Burch and my wife's name is Laurie DeLeon. I'm requesting a staff report for File # UP 22-13.

I have submitted 5 complaint reports to Code Enforcement in the last 5 months and not heard back from your department on a single complaint. I submitted a letter to Mary Darby and received an automated email claiming that my complaints would be investigated and I would be notified of the results. I DID NOT hear back from Code Enforcement on the investigation and the events continue to take place at 2550 Soda Bay Road. I have documented all of the events since Oct 2021 and have documentation of my filed complaints. We are going to have plenty to say on this matter, and we are willing, and able to go as far as we need to to shut this venue down once and for all. We are also going to offer proof that the existing permit should be revoked with prejudice due to the gross negligence of the occupants.

Please send me a Staff Report ASAP to allow us time to prepare our opposition.

Thank You,

Mark Burch

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** tasty bassy <tastybassy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2022 11:32 AM  
**To:** Marcus Beltramo; Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The Ripe Choice Major use permit

Dear Community Dev Planning,

I am Christian Clark. I have been a resident of lake county since 2007.

I have worked for and around The Ripe Choice Farm for the last 18-months. In my opinion, they represent a great asset to Lakeport, Kelseyville, and lake county.

I met them through the Farmers Market.

Mark and Tammy have helped me explore agriculture as a career by working with their row crops and general maintenance of the farm.

In addition, I have indulged myself in stepping up my love of baking in their commercial kitchen. I get to bake wonderful breads, scones, muffins and experiment using their orchard fruit. I also get to create dishes from the crops I grow. I will also begin selling their wares with Mark at the Farmers Market. In other words they are giving me a chance to create something.

They never turn down a request from group who want to hold a meeting in there barn.

The fundraiser Mark does is so fun and different from any other local fundraisers.

I have personally been on hand for many of the events held at 2550 Soda Bay Rd. Throughout The Ripe Choice's occupation of this address none of these events that I have been a part of have been out of hand or over the top. Indeed, clients generally are contractually obligated to be off the premises by 11pm, with music/noise being cut off by 10pm. Assuming clientele are respectful of contractual obligations, most are, there will be no record of any complaints other than from the one neighbor based on what I have heard.

The notion that The Ripe Choice is any kind of nuisance to the residents of the surrounding community is absurd exaggeration.

The Ripe Choice has proven to be an outstanding example for Lake county residents and businesses alike. And they are giving me a chance to create a path for myself moving forward.

Any who would bring the integrity of Mark and Tamara Lipps into question, clearly do not know them. In a short time they have become an integral part of our community.

I certainly do not want them to leave. They are part of what is positive about Lake County.

Thank you for reading.

Christian Clark  
Farm Manager



## Jim Feenan

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**From:** Mary Darby  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 8:22 AM  
**To:** Jim Feenan  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Letter In Support of Ripe Choice Farm & Catering

Please add to upload

**From:** Karen Pavone [mailto:karenpavonephoto@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 8:17 PM  
**To:** Mary Darby <Mary.Darby@lakecountyca.gov>; Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecountyca.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter In Support of Ripe Choice Farm & Catering

Dear Ms. Darby and Mr. Porter,

I am writing in support of the Ripe Choice Farm and Catering, which is currently under review by the Lake County Planning Commission, and will appear before the commission for a public hearing on Thursday, May 26. I wish to have this letter entered into the official record of the aforementioned hearing.

I first met Tammy & Mark Lipps when they joined our Lake County community in March 2019--just as the pandemic took hold. They moved here and quickly dove in, despite the considerable challenges covid presented to newcomers and their new business--investing wholeheartedly in supporting local non-profits, joining Rotary, and giving back generously to their new community in donations as well as service.

I have both attended and photographed several events held at Ripe Choice Farm. Not once have I witnessed inconsiderate behavior, late hours, or off-site parking. And I have no doubt that if any of their neighbors approached them directly with a concern, they would take it to heart and make every effort to accommodate them. These are good people--caring, giving, and hard-working. Our county government should be doing everything in its power to support and encourage them to succeed in business.

Sincere regards,

Karen Pavone

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Karen Pavone, Lifestyle photographer  
<https://www.karenpavonephotography.com>

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** Mary Darby  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:03 AM  
**To:** Jim Feenan  
**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Ripe Choice Farm Permit Hearing May 26, 2022

Add to files.

**From:** Mimi Whittaker [mailto:mimi@mimiwhittaker.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 11:12 AM  
**To:** Dist4 PlanningComm <dist4planningcomm@lakecountyca.gov>  
**Cc:** Mary Darby <Mary.Darby@lakecountyca.gov>; Eric Porter <Eric.Porter@lakecountyca.gov>; tammy@theripechoice.net; Mark Lipps <mark@marklipps.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Ripe Choice Farm Permit Hearing May 26, 2022

Dear Ms. Price,

I am writing on behalf of Mark and Tammy Lipps of Ripe Choice Farm. As a small business owner, relatively new to Lake County (3 1/2 yrs) I have found the Lipps to be fantastic ambassadors for the county. Mark writes a newsletter weekly about the happenings in the county and quite frankly, it has been the MOST valuable publication I have received to alert me to activities and businesses that I wanted to support. I receive the local paper and a few other newsletters, but the one Mark sends is always upbeat and warm in tone. The effort of writing a weekly newsletter and collecting information from local businesses is a labor of love. The work of running a farm is a labor of love. The energy to freely promote business and connect it's people is a rare commodity. Frankly, I haven't ever witnessed this much effort on behalf of an entire county in my decades on the planet.

One of the county's most valuable assets is it's welcoming nature. As a former Sonoma County resident, I have felt so much appreciation for the genuine feeling of the people I've met and businesses I've frequented here. In fact, I am much more willing to buy local and support local business here than I ever was in Sonoma County! It has to do with the people. Always the people, and I know you understand this, or you wouldn't be in office to serve us in this county.

The Lipps admit there were some mistakes made that upset one neighbor - hence the hearing coming up on May 26th. The other neighbors from what I understand are supportive in that they know there are corrective actions already being put into place. I would hope that the voice of one doesn't drown out the voices of many.

I appreciate your time in reviewing my letter. I truly believe that Ripe Choice Farm is an asset to the county, the community and to small business in this area. I would be heartsick if they had to close or move away.

Respectfully submitted,

Mimi Whittaker

**Jim Feenan**

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**From:** Lee Zellweger <lee@zellwegers.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 13, 2022 12:43 PM  
**To:** Dist4 PlanningComm  
**Cc:** Mary Darby; Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The Ripe Choice Farm/Mark & Tammy Lipps Planning Meeting

Hello Christina, Mary & Eric-

My name is Lee Zellweger from Manhattan Beach, CA. I am a long-time friend of the Lipps family and a newly converted fan of Lake County after having visited them at the Ripe Choice Farm several times since they moved up from Manhattan Beach in 2020.

I understand that there is going to be a hearing regarding their status as a small business and what types of events, etc they will be allowed to host at their property. Thought it important that I lend my support, having known and been a fan of the Lipps for 25 years. I have seen first-hand, over and over, how Mark & Tammy help build communities, and have an incredibly positive impact on the communities they are involved in, whether that was here in Manhattan Beach, or in their new home in Lake County.

I have lots of friends who I appreciate, but I don't think there are any that I would genuinely describe as a "force for good" in the community besides Mark & Tammy. It's not just their intentions that are good...which is easy for all of us...but their actions that are good...which most of us don't actually deliver on. They do.

They are not just good, but great neighbors!

I hope you reward them for their positive efforts and influence. Otherwise, would be a shame.

Best,

Lee Zellweger  
3005 Oak Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA  
310-800-8484

P.S. By the way, it took Mark & Tammy all of about two full minutes to become Lake County's biggest boosters. During our numerous visits to their farm over the last two years we have been introduced to wineries, restaurants, and hotels, participated in charitable events, and generally have grown to appreciate all that Lake County offers. Again, a force for good!

## Eric Porter

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**From:** Yahoo File <michaelsanta@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 6, 2022 8:52 AM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Major Use Permit (file no. UP 22-13)

6 May 2022  
Lakeport

The project referred to above and published in today's Record Bee (May 6, 2022) may have a significant error in it that needs to be corrected.

The Notice of Intent published says the location of the project is at 1550 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport, with an AP number of 008-010-46.

However, the address corresponding to the above APN is 2550 Soda Bay Road. (I could not find a 1550 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport, property.)

If I am mistaken, I apologize for taking your valuable time.

Michael Santarelli  
Lakeport CA

## Eric Porter

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**From:** Mark Burch <markthewinemaker@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 5, 2022 2:01 PM  
**To:** Eric Porter  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] UP 22-13

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Please send me a Staff Report ASAP to allow us time to prepare our opposition.

Thank You,

Mark Burch

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10/24/21 - HOT ONES - SHERIFF'S SUPERVISORS

11/6/21 - MEXICAN PARTY - OUTDOORS, LIGHTS,  
UNBELIEVABLY LOUD - PAST 10pm

11/15/21 - WEDDING 55-80 ppl

11/20/21 - 18-20 ppl

12/3/21 - 18-20 ppl

12/9/21 - 40-50 ppl

1/8/22 - 18-25 ppl

2/14/22 - 40-50 ppl

- 3/14/22 - 250-300 ppl PARKED ON SODA BAY

NOT REPORTED YET:

3/26/22-100-125 ppl

4/23/22-80-100 ppl WEDDING

4/30/22 - HOT ONES-

COMPLAINTS FILED - ONE OF THEM IS MISSING

SR21-01367

SR21-01368 (SR21-011378)

SR21-01406

SR22-00121

I FILED COMPLAINTS ON THESE DATES

11-9-21

11-15-21

11-22-21

2-14-22

3-14-22



