

To the Board of County Commissioners,

I would like to share how I came to need your help. I hope to come away with your approval to reinstate AG status for R6206966.

I received my tax bill in early February like everyone else, but this year it was \$5,111.68, as opposed to just over \$7.00 which has been a normal tax bill for the property. I have been in good standing with my AG status for over 8 years and could not figure out why or how I lost it. The AG status agreement was overseen, created and approved with the help of the assessors office back in 2014. Everything on the agreement had been carefully followed.

When I reached out to the assessors office February 2nd, I spoke with Ryan Gelling, who I might add is a very knowledgeable, thoughtful and understanding person. At the time, he shared that I neglected to respond to a mailing that went out in August of 2020 — a mailing asking about AG activity on my property. I never received this mailing. If the mailing did come, it may have gotten misplaced or lost while I was fighting for my life in the hospital. Due to an undiagnosed ruptured appendix, I was in and out of the hospital and in recovery from Aug 2020 to Feb 2021. Almost 2 years later, I'm still facing issues from my ruptured appendix.

Ryan also shared that a Notice of Value was sent out in May of 2021. I received this document and I searched this

document for anything that would show loss of AG status. I did not find anything that looked unusual; nothing that showed my AG status was pending or at risk of loss in anyway, so I filed it. Obviously, this was a mistake. Ryan shared if I had reached out then, this abatement could have been avoided. The Notice of Value is very unclear unless you see it regularly. Ryan agreed with my observations. It would be very helpful to have it clearly written out if one is about to lose AG status on the Notice of Value. I feel this is important for you all to hear and hopefully a change can be added to the Notice of Value that may save you all time and give heads up to other community members in the future.

Ryan also sent out Petition for Abatement papers for me to complete. I was asked to fill out sections I and II and to return these with documents proving AG activity for R6206966 for the years 2019-2021. I did this the next day, Feb 3rd. I sent back 3 years of canceled checks as that was the quickest way to show AG activity. He said the documents looked great and shared that this abatement should be straight forward since the assessor's office was not contesting my request.

However, Ryan reached out again the next day to say that something unfortunate and unexpected came up with my abatement. Apparently, because of the canceled checks, Gary Peterson had reached out to the Division of Property Taxation to see if they had ever come across a scenario where a land owner was paying an AG Operator for

services rendered. Understand this is not the case at all.

After I read Ryan's email, I knew that if I located my 2014 notebooks I would find all my notes from the inception of my current AG agreement. At the time, I took copious notes on absolutely everything as I had to care for my mother with her dementia. In 2014 there were a lot of changes. For many years my mother had a relationship with a rancher who was my mother's neighbor when she was a child. He grazed his cows on the land. However, in 2014, the rancher was no longer grazing his animals as he getting older and moved away and my mother with her dementia was unable to manage her affairs, I had to figure how to properly maintain the AG status. In my follow up email to Ryan, I shared that I found all my notebooks from 2014, and just as I remembered, I have the names of all the people I spoke with as well the notes of what was exchanged in those conversations.

I needed help and guidance so I spoke to many groups and organizations. These conversations led me to Sara Hagenbuch in the assessor's office and Pat with Green Goat Patrol. What I have set up for AG status, is what I was advised for me to do by the assessor's office. I do not have a fenced in property so for grazing movable fencing was an option. Pat was already set up to use moveable fencing for grazing her herd. However, setting up the moveable fencing was time consuming so Pat needed to be compensated for her time. Also, Pat needed to hire a herder during the day as well as transport her goats home

each night to protect them from large predators, which took extra gas. This compensation for the work contract was also written into the agreement. Following the advise of the the assessor's office, I was told to write everything into the agreement. So the agreement was written up very carefully. It was approved by the assessor's office. Included on the agreement is that Pat would be paid twice during the year for the time of setting up movable fencing for grazing, hiring a herder, and transporting them home at night to protect them from large predators. It was also advised by the assessor's office to use "work order" instead of "lease." The assessor's office even requested that the movable fencing be moved once during each contract. This agreement in place today was advised and approved by the assessor office in 2014 to retain AG status. And everything written into it was done so that nothing could be misinterpreted. The canceled checks that Gary received to prove AG activity is clearly spelled out in the agreement and cannot be misinterpreted as something else.

I searched my emails and found exchanges with Sara from Nov 2016, where she requested proof of AG activity and a canceled check was sent (similarly to what I sent Gary through Ryan this year) and her email response: "Perfect, that's what I needed. Thanks so much." Had she responded otherwise, I would have happily changed the work order. I will repeat that my work contract was, in fact, advised and approved by the Routt County Assessor's office back in 2014. These email exchanges are included

for you to see.

Also included for you is the original agreement as that was approved to retain AG status for my property back in 2014. It has a 2015 date - back then we just changed the date.

Also sent to you, is another agreement used in 2020. Again it's exactly the same document but with a different year. Each year the same work contract has been used, only the date is changed to reflect the year used. I shared with Ryan that at no point from then until last week did anyone tell us that this agreement was inappropriate or incorrect. Had someone told us back when we had these conversations, if anyone in the office had said it must be done differently, we would have done it differently. I was specifically told that it does not matter if she pays us, or we pay her. Just write it up in the agreement.

Based on the fact that I've done everything that was advised and suggested by the Routt County Assessor's office, I feel I should have their support and not be penalized and lose AG status for doing what was advised of me. All I can do is be honest, I understand that it may be difficult for staff in the assessors office to remember all conversations — especially from 8 years ago — which is why I always took notes on these conversations. Maybe no one in the assessors office would give the advise I was given back in 2014, today, in 2022. But in 2014, that is the advice I was given. Times change and that's fine. I did follow the advise of the Routt County Assessor's office.

It's been very important for me to do the right thing. I am willing to make adjustments to my work contract if that is necessary. I am willing to make whatever changes are needed and be acceptable. As far as falling out of good standing with my AG status that's due to unfortunate circumstances - hospitalization and undelivered mailings along with misunderstanding the Notice of Value.

I thank you for your time and I am hopeful I will have your support in bringing the 2021 tax bill to AG status as well as reinstating AG status moving forward for R6206966.

Agreement

Date: April 20, 2020

Owner: Priscilla M. Paetsch Trust
Brigitte P Gray, trustee
724 20th Street, Wilmette, IL 60091
brigittegray@gmail.com
847-226-9616

Service Provider: Pat Evangelatos
32640 County Road 20
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Property: Lot 2, Drea Exemption Subdivision 33472 County Road 24 [number used on tax notice for 2014]
33250 County Road 24 (number used by Priscilla Paetsch)

Access: East of Hwy 40, where 131 comes into Hwy 40 from the west, continue east on County Road 24. There is an access road to the property about 700 ft to the east of Priest Creek Road off of County Road 24. There is a fork (a driveway) in the road, go left, the access road brings into Drea Exmpt lots 1 and 2. Lot 2 is to the right (east) about 500ft. Lot 2 runs from County Road 24 to the north.

Contract Length: Summer months of 2020

Agreement: Work contract to replace lease to retain AG status

Work contract: Pat will look at vegetation on property and will decide where to set up a moveable fence for grazing and weed mitigation for her goats to work on the property. As agreed upon by the Routt County Assessor, the fencing will be moved once during the summer. A herder will maybe present with the goats during the day; however, due to large predators in the area, the goats will be taken home over night.

Compensation: \$1,000 sent with agreement
\$1,000 due upon completion

Agreement

Date: February 10, 2015

Owner: Brigitte P. Gray, power of attorney for
Priscilla Paetsch, trustee
724 20th Street, Wilmette, IL 60091
brigittegray@email.com
847-226-9616

Service Provider: Pat Evangelatos
P.O. Box 776277, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477

Property: Lot 2, Drea Exemption Subdivision 33472 County
Road 24 [number used on tax notice for 2014]
33250 County Road 24 (number used by Priscilla
Paetsch)

Access: East of Hwy 40, where 131 comes into Hwy 40
from the west, continue east on County Road 24.
There is an access road to the property about 700 ft
to the east of Priest Creek Road off of County Road
24. There is a fork (a driveway) in the road, go left,
the access road brings into Drea Exmpt lots 1 and
2. Lot 2 is to the right (east) about 500ft. Lot 2
runs from County Road 24 to the north.

Contract Length: Summer months of 2015

Agreement: Work contract to replace lease to retain AG status

Work contract: Pat will look at vegetation on property and will
decide where to set up a moveable fence for
grazing and weed mitigation for about 50-70 goats
to work on the property. As agreed upon by the
Routt County Assessor, the fencing will be moved
once during the summer. A herder will maybe
present with the goats during the day; however,
due to large predators in the area, the goats will be
taken home over night.

Compensation: \$1,000 sent with agreement
\$1,000 due upon completion mid to late August

BRIGITTE PAETSCH GRAY 03-00
EDWARD W GRAY III
724 - 20TH ST.
WILMETTE, IL 60091-2386

70-2553/719

759

DATE 10/19/16

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF

Green Goat Patrol, LLC

\$1,000.-

One thousand ⁴⁰⁰ 100

DOLLARS  Security features included. See back of card.

Brigitte Paetsch
FIRST BANK & TRUST
WINNETKA

100 Green Bay Road • Winnetka, Illinois 60093

MEMO

Land management #33472
balance due 2016



⑆071925538⑆ 1068170⑈ 0759



Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Green Goat Patrol _ Cancelled Check

Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 4, 2016 at 10:46 AM

To: assessor@co.routt.co.us

Cc: "Sara Hagenbuch, Steamboat Assessor Office" <shagenbuch@co.routt.co.us>

Bcc: brigittegray@gmail.com

Hi Sarah,

Here is a copy of the canceled check. The lot number is on the check. Let me know if this is sufficient for the records.

Thank you,

Brigitte

847-226-9616

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tad Gray <tadgray@me.com>**Date:** November 2, 2016 at 5:58:10 PM CDT**To:** Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>**Subject:** Green Goat Patrol _ Cancelled Check**Green Goat Patrol _ Cancelled Check.pdf**

142K



Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Green Goat Patrol _ Cancelled Check

Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Mon, Mar 14, 2022 at 12:31 PM

To: brigitte gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>, Ryan Gelling <rgelling@co.routt.co.us>, gpeterson@co.routt.co.us

Hi Gary,

I have forwarded emails with exchanges with Sara Hagenbuch back in 2016. Again, sending canceled checks showing AG activity. And she responded with, "Perfect, that's what I needed. Thanks so much."

I'll keep looking for any other relevant emails.

Again, thank you for your time,
Brigitte

[Quoted text hidden]



Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Green Goat Patrol _ Cancelled Check

Sarah Hagenbuch <shagenbuch@co.routt.co.us>
To: Brigitte Gray <brigittegray@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 4, 2016 at 11:02 AM

Perfect, that's what I needed. Thanks so much.

Sarah Hagenbuch

Appraiser, Routt County Assessor's Office

970-870-5455

[Quoted text hidden]