



March 30, 2026

Via email

Weber County Commission

Commissioner Sharon Bolos
sbolos@webercountyutah.gov

Commissioner James H. Harvey
jharvey@webercountyutah.gov

Commissioner Gage Froerer
gfroerer@webercountyutah.gov

Dear Commissioners Bolos, Froerer, and Harvey:

I am the Vice President of Investigations for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and I am writing to respectfully request that you deny any applications for unregulated horse racing events (called “matched races” in previous applications to Weber County).

Live broadcasts from such races held at the Golden Spike Event Center in 2024 and 2025, as well as professional race videos posted after the events, showed participants carrying syringes into the facility, administering injections to horses shortly before race time in the paddock area and on the track, jockeys wearing electric shock devices, and even a race team using a **Hot-Shot electric prod** on a horse in the starting gate. Additionally, jockeys whip horses without limit, sometimes over 30 times in a 300-yard race.

[PETA’s investigations](#), as well as raids by Texas State law enforcement¹, have shown that the drugs injected into horses at unregulated races typically include **methamphetamine and cocaine**, sometimes in combination with tramadol, methylphenidate, benzylpiperazine, and other drugs. In a race at the Golden Spike Event Center on June 22, 2025, a horse belonging to race organizer Inoel Chavez and his partners, racing for the stable Cuadra El Misionero, broke down shortly after crossing the finish line and either died or was killed. Live video from the race showed that the team’s trainer, Mariano Ruiz, was holding a syringe while entering the facility and then shaking it while in the paddock.

While we have not seen any commission meeting minutes indicating that races have been approved for 2026, the organizers have been promoting [seven race dates in 2026](#), have posted a [schedule of 18 races for April 12](#), and created a [Facebook event](#).

¹ Texas Racing Commission Meeting Minutes from December 11, 2024 (see pages 66-67), (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61f1f682f08bd15f1e6a2d9f/t/6772fe3090b3e47c9098837b/1735589425358/TxRC+mtg+121124+%2B+mtg+materials.pdf>)

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- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

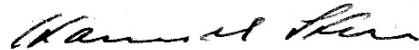
Please review the attached evidence that shows an utter disregard for horse welfare as well as a plethora of illegal activities, and deny any permits for unregulated horse racing to continue in Weber County.

More evidence is available at the following Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/tlu8qyorlw142cle0lxoa/AJTebXGrq779-MbRoM98akQ?rlkey=lfwzv2442mvz6139gjei0r77&dl=0>.

PETA is prepared to assist you in any way possible and welcomes the opportunity to meet with you.

Respectfully,



Hannah Schein

Vice President of Investigations and Research, PETA

HannahS@peta.org | 757-943-7431

cc: Marty Smith, Director of Weber County Culture, Parks & Rec. (msmith@co.weber.ut.us)
Duncan Olsen, General Manager, Golden Spike Event Center (dolsen@co.weber.ut.us)
Ryan Arbon, Weber County Sheriff (rarbon@webercountyutah.gov)
Christopher F. Allred, Weber County Attorney (callred@co.weber.ut.us)
Thane Marshall, Executive Director, Utah Horse Racing Commission,
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