

The Times-Independent

Serving Moab and Southeast Utah Since 1896

The true spirit of Moab
My View

April 08, 2026

[By Dave Closser](#)

I'd like to offer an alternate perspective to Craig Weston's characterization of Echo Canyon in his April 2 letter to the editor ["Echo Canyon: Building a community that reflects the spirit of Moab," The Times-Independent, April 2].



Photo caption: Heavy equipment is staged at the site of the Echo Canyon development, formerly Kane Creek, on Jan. 10, 2024. File photo by Doug McMurdo

He writes that Echo Canyon is being designed with our community in mind. And that Echo Canyon will increase tax revenues, which would help fund schools, libraries, healthcare, etc. He states that it will add workforce housing, construction jobs and long-term employment. This all sounds good to me, as I'm guessing it does to many of you.

Mr. Weston's letter paints a nice picture of what he believes Echo Canyon could bring to our community once it's built. But conveniently he avoids any mention of what's been going on over the last few years with this project of his. As I read through his letter there were two things I kept thinking. Words are a Dime a Dozen and Actions Speak Louder than Words. Mr. Weston can paint a positive picture for the future, but he can't get away from the past.

I've listed below several events or actions previously taken by these developers that just don't mesh with what Mr. Weston writes in his letter, and honestly cause me to question his sincerity.

– In October of 2021 Mr. Weston was quoted as saying “We could build over 2,000 housing units on our 180 acres.” But that didn't resonate with him. He said 30 to 50 units was a better number, with a center for research and development.

But just three months later, in January of 2022, he submitted a preliminary plat application with the County for a massive 586-unit development. That's roughly twice the number of housing units found in Castle Valley.

– When the Grand County commissioners were considering denying the application for his massive project, his lawyer threatened to sue the county for hundreds of millions of dollars in damages.

– It's known that the fill which has already been placed didn't meet engineering requirements, which may result in shifting and settling down the road. It's also known that he didn't have a legal right to the large quantities of water he used when placing this fill. The Utah Division of Water Rights had to shut him down.

– He submitted four different development masterplans to the county, that I'm aware of. And none of the plans said a thing about affordable housing. The Echo Canyon masterplan approved by the Lieutenant Governor's office does list 48 of the project's total 478 housing units as affordable housing rental units. This was included only because “Intending” to develop at least 10% of their project as affordable was a condition of approval. The remaining 430 units in the Echo Canyon masterplan are priced at an average of \$1,800,000 or \$2,400,000 depending on which of the developers' datasets is used.

– There has been no apparent effort on the part of the developers to work with our community, to address concerns we might have, and find some compromise. I've heard nothing from the developers about trying to downscale the project or even build elsewhere. And if they were truly interested in providing affordable housing, wouldn't they be pursuing grants, loans or tax credits to this end? But I haven't heard a peep about this. From the beginning, it's felt very much like their way or the high way.

But even if Mr. Weston were true to his word, and Echo Canyon would benefit our community in the ways he's suggesting, would it be worth it? Would it be worth allowing the destruction of one of the most beautiful areas in our county? Would it be worth the chaos that would ensue once construction begins in earnest, and continues for years? Would the benefits outweigh what we'd lose as a community?

I believe the creation of Kane Creek Development Watch (Watch) provides an answer to this question. This group was created in our community for no other reason than to stop this development.

Watch has raised tens of thousands of dollars to fight this project. Watch has initiated two distinct lawsuits challenging the project. Watch has over 650 donors, 11,000 Instagram followers and a petition signed by over 18,000 individuals opposing the project.

We clearly believe that what might be gained pales in comparison to what we stand to lose. And we're never going to give up our fight. Watch is a group that represents the true spirit of Moab.

Dave Closser, a member of Kane Creek Development Watch, writes from Moab.