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On behalf of Pajarito Mountain Ski Area (Pajarito), Mountain Capital Partners (MCP) would like to provide the following comments on the *Camp May Water Pipeline Project Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)*. We understand that the project includes Los Alamos County's construction of a water pipeline, as well as electrical and fiber optic lines and supporting booster pump stations, along Camp May Road to connect the existing Los Alamos County water supply to Pajarito and Camp May. MCP is a partner with Los Alamos County in the development of this project and strongly supports the Forest Service's approval of the project.

As the owners of Pajarito as well as a variety of other ski areas in the Southwest (including Arizona Snowbowl and Sipapu Ski and Summer Resort), we have a longstanding partnership with National Forests across Region 3 of the Forest Service. We value our working relationship with these National Forests and recognize the value they provide to the American public. We would first like to thank the Santa Fe National Forest for developing a robust analysis of the anticipated project impacts. We support the Santa Fe National Forest's analysis and determinations presented throughout the Draft EA.

MCP strongly supports the stated Purpose and Need for the project. As page 2 of the Draft EA states, Pajarito has only been able to make snow on its full 40 acres of snowmaking terrain once in the past five years and in dry years does not have access to snowmaking water at all. As a considerable source of recreation and economic support for Los Alamos County and northern New Mexico, this can severely impact our guest's experience and affect our ability to open sufficient terrain. The addition of a water pipeline to Pajarito will allow us to provide consistent snow coverage and improve snow quality, specifically in our areas with existing snowmaking infrastructure, ensuring a positive guest experience. The water pipeline will also provide much needed potable water to support our on-mountain facilities that are currently dependent on a deficient domestic well.

We understand that the Jemez Mountains salamander and Mexican spotted owl are both species of concern for the project. The Project Design Criteria developed for the Jemez Mountains salamander on page 13 of the Draft EA will be adhered to as feasible in order to reduce impacts to this species. In addition, we support the determination that the project "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" the Mexican spotted owl as discussed on page 39 of the Draft EA. We understand that two Mexican spotted owl surveys have been completed to date with no detections. Further Project Design Criteria are included on Page 14 that we feel will adequately prevent impacts to the Mexican spotted owl.

We support the analysis of other environmental impacts presented in the Draft EA. We feel that findings discussed on pages 24 and 25 of the Draft EA accurately summarize the recreational benefits of the project: that providing enhanced fire suppression around the project area would improve the longevity of recreation along Camp May Road and that the ability to provide additional snowmaking would improve snow



conditions and increase the duration that terrain can be accessed at Pajarito. Furthermore, we support the finding on page 28 of the Draft EA that the project could reduce fire severity though increased water available for firefighting. Given our familiarity with the existing road and parking conditions, we also concur with the findings presented on page 30 of the Draft EA: we agree that the project will likely result in negligible impacts to traffic and parking along Camp May Road and at Pajarito.

We also support the hydrology conclusions presented on pages 36 and 37 of the Draft EA, that the project will result in increases to water yield and peak flow ranging from 0 to 0.5 percent of existing conditions and no negative impacts to water quality of the study watersheds are anticipated. We agree that the project will have minimal impacts on the hydrology of the area, including water available to the residents of Los Alamos County.

Finally, we support the Forest's conclusions regarding the pipeline's effects to land use, specifically that the project would not directly result in the development of residential or commercial projects in the adjacent area. We understand that current Los Alamos County and Sandoval County zoning regulations limit such development, which would require public hearings or re-zoning.

We are grateful for our partnership with the Santa Fe National Forest and hope that you will consider these comments as part of your environmental review of the *Camp May Water Pipeline Project*.

Sincerely,



James Coleman, Managing Partner
Mountain Capital Partners