To the Caribou-Targhee National Forest,

Regarding the proposed Grand Targhee expansion, there are numerous ways in which the proposal would affect the Forest Service and residents of Teton County negatively. Some expansion is reasonable, but this is a wholesale quantity.

The requested enlargement of their special use permit includes development on south-facing slopes into the upper reaches of Teton Canyon. That part of the proposed development should be rejected out of hand, because it would intrude on the integrity of Teton Canyon, which is perhaps the most valued canyon in this National Forest, home to Teton Valleys most valued hiking trails and most seen views of and in the Wilderness Area, and provides important habitat for elk, moose and rare forest carnivores, turning what is a de facto natural area into a ski area expansion.

Where is the wisdom of south-facing expansion in consideration of climate change? Ski areas everywhere are facing fewer ski-days and south-facing snow is the first to go.

They are also proposing night skiing, with its attendant impairment of dark skies, which would further degrade the experience of living in Teton Valley. Exemplary is the Kelly Canyon ski area on the west side of the Big Hole Mountains. When night-skiing is happening, Kelly Canyon gives off a constant glow which permeates the western sky as viewed from Teton Valley.

Then there are the issues of inadequate roads and other infrastructures to handle their desired increase in customers, which would happen if they have their way. Who would pay for that? Grand Targhee? Unlikely. The Forest Service? Sure. And who would benefit? Not the residents of Teton Valley, except for employees which are mostly seasonal. Guests at Grand Targhee primarily spend their money at Grand Targhee, which of course is their idea.

Housing in Teton Valley has limitations already and cannot nor should not support a large increase in population which would in turn cause increased demands on infrastructure, putting additional stresses on an already over-used malfunctioning sewer system, road maintenance, schools, policing, etc. The list goes on. And additional infrastructure costs are *never* paid for by tax revenue from housing.

If the owners of Grand Targhee were to receive everything in this proposal that they want, it would negatively affect the quality and character of life in Teton Valley in measurable ways one of which would be by increasing the cost of living and home ownership, in a valley where such costs are already high for ordinary people, such as those who work at the hardware store or for the rank and file of the Forest Service.

Because they have money and, presumably, clout, is not reason enough to give ski area investors carte-blanche acceptance of their expansion dreams. Their desires to develop Targhee into a major destination ski resort are contrary to the qualities that make life tenable, not to mention good, in Teton Valley.

The owners of Grand Targhee in concert with regional planners at the Forest Service need, to paraphrase someone involved in a different ski area, to adequately consider a smaller and, therefore, less environmentally intrusive overhaul of Grand Targhee Resort before approving the project and resolve to develop Targhee into the charming, environmentally sensitive, viable project it has the potential to be.

This quote regarded a different ski area expansion proposal, but is pertinent here:

"This decision is yet another reminder that the agencies entrusted with protecting beautiful Lake Tahoe, which has already suffered so much from runaway development, must not continue to allow private gain at the Lake's expense," said Earthjustice lawyer Wendy Park, whose firm represented the groups.

In addition, the initial plans which were ok’d years ago have never been carried to completion and it is likely that this proposal is merely being presented to increase the value of Grand Targhee for the resale value of the ski area to one of the mega-ski resorts that are already exploding and dominating the ski business.

The many environmental consequences of expansion need to be fully considered before the project picks up momentum, not after. If something is built it won’t be unbuilt.

Simply, Grand Targhee needs to pare down its expansion plans. The Forest Service needs to not approve a plan that benefits a few, rather than the general public.

Sincerely,

*Clint & Virginia*

Clint & Virginia Grosse