

International Institute of Social Studies

Forest Service
US Department of Agriculture
Taos, New Mexico
United States of America

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Subject
Concern over Taos Ski Valley development

Department
Governance, Law and Social Justice
Research Group

Project leader, Legal Mobilization:
Analyzing Law-Based Advocacy

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Dear Esteemed Members of the Forest Service,

I am an Associate Professor in Legal Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Netherlands, but I grew up in New Mexico. Throughout my youth I spent every summer hiking or backpacking in the wilderness and every winter skiing in the mountains, very often at Taos Ski Valley.

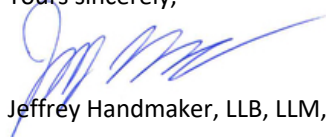
As a longtime Albuquerque, New Mexico resident and frequent visitor to Taos, I know and love the area well, from the hike up to Williams Lake and Wheeler Peak, to the fabled Al's Run. My brother and his family even came back to settle in Taos with his family.

Moreover, as a university professor and human rights lawyer with 3 decades of expertise in social and environmental justice, I am aware how public participation in proposed development activities is a crucial part of the decision-making process.

I have made an effort to become acquainted with the proposed developments at Taos Ski Valley, which include a proposed 5 million gallon water tank and a high-speed gondola and cross-country trail system, alongside hotel construction. I am deeply concerned that these proposed developments will cause massive and irreparable damage, both to the delicate ecosystem in the area as well as the water catchment area.

While I certainly recognize the value that Taos Ski Valley and associated businesses to the economic sustainability of the region, this value will be utterly eroded by these proposed developments, which I totally oppose.

Yours sincerely,



Jeffrey Handmaker, LLB, LLM, PhD, Associate Professor in Legal Sociology

Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Law, University of the Witwatersrand
2020-21 Senior fellow, Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies,
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