

U.S. Forest Service
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Subject: Comments of Telluride Ski Resort Improvements EA-Western Slope Dark Sky Coalition Exterior Lighting Concerns

Greetings:

The Western Slope Dark Sky Coalition (WSDSC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to preserving the pristine night skies of Colorado's Western Slope by reducing and controlling exterior lighting. We do this through, education and collaboration with communities and government.

The Coalition is supporting the application to DarkSky International for a San Miguel County Dark Sky Reserve, hopefully the first in Colorado, second in the USA, and 24th in the world. A County-wide Reserve will set a global precedent for Dark Sky International. The application has been and is supported by San Miguel County grants and DarkSky Colorado consulting supported by the Colorado Tourism Office. A Dark Sky Reserve is comprised of two areas: a Core (USFS Thunder Trails Recreational Area) and a Periphery (the rest of San Miguel County).

The Coalition Board, after discussion of the Lift 7 project, is deeply concerned about the proposed rezoning of open space at the base of Telski's Lift 7 for high-density development. High-density development risks introducing excessive exterior lighting, increasing skyglow from artificial light that may threaten the Reserve's application.

Telluride and Mountain Village have robust, Reserve compliant lighting regulations approved by DarkSky International. Those regulations need to be carefully applied to the buildings in the project. Waiving any of them would undermine the County's commitment to dark sky preservation.

Artificial light at night negatively affects human health, harms wildlife, birds, and insects. It also diminishes the appreciation of celestial objects which would affect astrotourism, a growing spring/summer/and fall activity.

We urge the Forest Service to reconsider the rezoning considering our concern and preserve the open space in support of the Dark Sky Reserve. We will be happy to meet with you and the developers to discuss the lighting impact of the Lift 7 project.

Keeping you in the Dark,

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