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Comments: Comments on Camp May Water Pipeline Project

Ms. Bjorklund,

My name is Richard Swenson. I am a resident of Los Alamos. Attached, and also submitted below, are my comments and concerns regarding the Camp May Water Pipeline Project.

Global warming is real and is the fundamental issue driving the Camp May Water Pipeline Project. Without significant snow-making facilities (water, equipment and energy), the Pajarito Ski Area will not be profitable or competitive with other local ski facilities that have better environmental conditions. Closing the Pajarito Ski facility is a very difficult decision to accept due to the amazing efforts contributed by volunteers to this project over the last 70 years.

Global warming affects much more than the recreation of the ski hill. Demands for water will increase for all segments of our society. Here in Los Alamos, we will need much more water to keep our city green. This is evident with the number of dead and dying trees along our streets and in our yards. As a community, we have not come to grip with this one reality. Our water consumption for 2015 was approximately 3,750 acre-feet (ac-ft) per year out of the legal and available 5,541 ac-ft/yr, leaving an apparently comfortable margin of about 1,800 ac-ft/yr. This also only reduces the non-recoverable height of the aquifer in our water wells of a few feet.

However, other factors need to be considered. The lab (LANL) used 27.5% of the water in 2015. This could be significantly increased in the future due to the new national security requirements. The Chromium Clean-up Project alone consumes 700ac-ft/yr. In addition, we will have to use more water in the city if we want to keep our vegetations alive.

Ninety (90) ac-ft/yr of water for the ski area is not a whole lot of water but one can question whether it is enough to keep at least 10 acres of ski runs covered with high-cost, man-made snow for several months and whether it is feasible. The financial and contractual considerations are outside the scope of these environmental concerns and therefore would not be discussed here.

The water consumption of Los Alamos is 144 gallons per person per day, as compared to 90 gal per person in Santa Fe. There is also a moral consideration of how we as a community, consume water.

What is needed is the confirmed numbers considering all variables associated with the long-term impact of global warming.

Submitted by Richard Swenson, resident of Los Alamos, New Mexico