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First name: Andrea

Last name: Padilla

Organization: New Mexico Land Grant-Merced Consejo

Title: President

Comments: May 5, 2022

James Durán

Carson National Forest Supervisor

Dear Mr. Durán,

The New Mexico Land Grant-Merced Consejo is very concerned about the proposed improvements and expansions at the Taos Ski Valley by Taos Ski Valley, Inc.. We are concerned that these expansions, if approved, will have a negative effect on the communities surrounding the area, especially the minority communities that have historic ties to the area and the watershed. The New Mexico Land Grant-Merced Consejo is concerned that local area residents have not been included in the planning of these proposed expansions.

The New Mexico Land Grant-Merced Consejo is a statewide organization of land grants that represents more than two-dozen land grant communities across our great state. We are in full support of an Environmental Impact Study and/or full NEPA review of the impacts on the Rio Hondo water quality and quantity, as well as an assessment of the impacts to forest health and wildlife. The Consejo supports local community demands for full disclosure of any and all water rights that Taos Ski Valley has and proof that there is sufficient water for this expansion. We also have concerns regarding the water treatment plant and its ability to handle the increased tourism this expansion will create.

The Consejo is also very concerned and is opposed to the 5,000,000 gallon water tank, the High-Speed Gondola, the Nordic/snow-shoe trail system and the additional commercial construction that will put additional demand and stress on the local springs, groundwater and tributaries. Being that the Southwest is in a severe drought, expansion of the Taos Ski area is a very bad idea and shows no regard for the severity of the situation. As I write this letter, our land grant communities across northern New Mexico, including many in the Carson National Forest, are suffering catastrophic wildfires that burn their watersheds and the traditional resources that our communities have relied upon for centuries. We ask that the concerns of local communities, including the Aroyo Hondo Arriba Land Grant, be taken into proper consideration by the Carson National Forest and U.S. Forest Service.

Please feel free to contact me at [nmlgconsejo@gmail.com](mailto:nmlgconsejo@gmail.com) or [acfanta@hotmail.com](mailto:acfanta@hotmail.com), or at 505-514-1797 should you have any questions.

Andrea C. Padilla

President

New Mexico Land Grant-Merced Consejo