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Organization: Lake Tahoe Snowmobilers

Title: Executive Board

Comments: I am writing to oppose the approval of Temporary Winter Shelters #65559. Though I currently represent the Lake Tahoe Snowmobilers, I am from Washington State with a home in Mount Vernon, regularly snowmobile this area, and am a member of the Cascade Drift Skippers. I am invested in equitable access for OSV in Mount Baker and elsewhere in Washington.

Commercialization that provides access for only certain user groups is not in alignment with the mission, purpose, and duty of the National Forest. If commercialization were allowed, it would need to be truly multi-use, which includes equal access for OSV. Not only would this require equal use of the shelters and the surrounding land, but developed parking and grooming that allows for snowmobile parking and access.

I am concerned about the impact of annually installing and removing each shelter. If these shelters were to be allowed, they would need to be permanent in order to reduce environmental impact, and be accessible to all user groups, including snowmobilers.

Any and all use restrictions, which includes snow depth requirements, need to be scientifically supported. For instance, it is proven that a hiker has ten times the PSI impact on soil than that of a snowmobile.

I am concerned about private commercialization that will limit access to our public lands to a select few. Not only is this in direct conflict with the forest service's mission to support outdoor recreation for all user groups, it more importantly creates a greater divide for access to those who don't have equitable access such as those with disabilities, race, age, and socioeconomics. If something like this were allowed (with permanent structures), all user groups would need to be allowed, including snowmobilers so people with disabilities and age limits have equitable opportunity to access our public lands. And, OSV funds could be used to provide grants to all groups where there is an access gap, such as race and socioeconomic barriers.

It is vitally important that the National Forest ignore and publicly refute any false claims by anti-OSV groups such as claiming that OSV disturb wildlife or destroy habitat. These are blatantly false and have been scientifically proven false.

https://www.snowmobilers.org/docs/acsa_facts_and_myths_book.pdf

<https://www.snowmobileinfo.org/snowmobile-access-docs/Facts-and-Myths-About-Snowmobiling-and-Winter-Trails.pdf>