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Comments: I am submitting this letter/comment in support of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) at Grand Targhee Resort, as detailed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Most of the folks that have been loud surrounding the DEIS are those who oppose the resorts long-term plans. They see any changes with anti-business sentiment, a 'not in my backyard' perspective and a short-sighted perspective on how the ski industry actually operates and the challenges it endures. I do believe these folks are well intentioned but often make unfounded assumptions about the very motivation behind the DEIS, while aiming to spread a narrative where Teton County Idaho is somehow destroyed by a few more lifts, a higher resort carrying capacity or some expanded infrastructure.

I am writing this for the residents and visitors that truly love the resort and are, on balance, fully supportive of the DEIS and the long-term plan. We see a core vision that is focused on providing the best ski experience anywhere. It is truly exciting to see what's possible, and that includes the SUP expansion of terrain into South Bowl and Mono Trees. The new proposed lift into South Bowl would be one of the most amazing lifts in the U.S. and arguably the best single view in north American skiing. We should be proud of that fact and that more and more folks will get to enjoy these forest service lands in this way. I believe exposing more people to the awe-inspiring spectacle of nature, is on the whole, a positive force for future protections of wild lands. Apart from the vitriol on social media and those writing negative comments, the vast majority of folks are passionate and excited about the future of GTR and the items included in the DEIS, including the expansions presented.

An approval of the DEIS does not mandate a resort to proceed with development. It only establishes what could be done within regulatory frameworks. Much of what has been submitted would not only take many years to implement but a good part of it may never even come to fruition as those decisions will ultimately be based on normal business dynamics like financial feasibility, the competitive landscape and skier demand. We all saw how many years it took from approval to completion of the Colter lift. An approval of the DEIS as presented allows the resort to make a plan and prioritize key improvements so that GTR remains competitive and provides the desired experience with adequate lodging, increased food options and minimal wait times at the lifts. A common misperception is that, if approved, somehow all of this infrastructure will just magically appear. Of course, reality dictates that this is far from the case. This plan simply sets a foundation for the next 10-20+ years in GTR's evolution since its founding in 1969. Without strategic growth and responsible development of infrastructure and services, including the expansion of terrain, the resort risks falling behind in both safety and the desired guest experience.

Resort expansions are necessary. We simply aren't building new public ski resorts. In my lifetime, all 42 years of it, we have only seen one, Tamarack ID in 2004, which is still struggling. Silverton Colorado popped up in 2002 with a single fixed-grip chair, but can hardly be counted, as it only caters to advanced skiers, has no lodging/amenities and is primarily a helicopter operation. No ski resorts have been built in the U.S. since Tamarack in 2004 due to the overwhelming environmental regulations, land use restrictions, and financial challenges. The investment required is massive and the outcome of that investment is highly uncertain. We all hear about the handful of private ski resorts being worked on to cater to the ultra high net worth and their friends, but these do nothing to alleviate the present and future congestion at our public ski resorts. Like it or not, if riders don't want 30-minute lifelines as seen frequently across the skiing landscape, we have to expand existing public resorts.

Several DEIS's have been approved throughout the American west at resorts far and wide. Most of those that I have tracked over the years have been allowed to expand terrain within Forest Service lands so long as they

have mitigated concerns to a reasonable extent. Most skiers and residents welcome expansions of terrain and improvements of infrastructure and understand that these keep their favorite resorts competitive and contributing to their local economies. I believe that the GTR DEIS has done just that and has adequately mitigated the stated concerns of the U.S. Forest Service. Though the proximity to wilderness is a more sensitive feature of this particular EIS, the other elements of concern are quite similar to those in Colorado, Utah, Montana and elsewhere where many of these plans have been approved. I understand we all think "our place" is more special or more unique, but the truth is the process is in place for a reason. It is supposed to be fairly objective and not a matter of opinion. If it is followed, the right set of concerns are mitigated appropriately and all other stipulations are agreed to, this DEIS, just like the rest should be analyzed and ultimately approved. The system is not in place to pick favorites or cave to either crony capitalism or grassroots opposition campaigns.

In the last 20 years we have witnessed much of the ski industry be consolidated by large entities both public and private. This is due to the difficulty and variability that makes running a ski resort highly uncertain and dependent on weather and other events outside of an operator's control. This is why companies like Vail own so many properties and rely on season pass sales to hedge variabilities across their footprint. The owner of Grand Targhee has indicated time and again that he is not interested in selling out the resort. He is doing what he can to make it an example of what the skiing experience should look like. The improvements included in the DEIS are a part of his vision to keep the resort under local control while still being competitive with entities like Vail and Alterra. To remain competitive and financially viable, GTR needs to have a runway for these improvements over the course of many years as regional growth increases and skier visitation grows with it.

We should be proud that our beloved Grand Targhee is under local ownership and do nothing to prohibit the future viability of this resort that contributes economically to our community. We are one of the last independent resorts left! It is quite publicized what the result of corporate ownership looks like. Those who oppose the DEIS would do well to appreciate that the DEIS approved under this ownership would look organic and methodical with the community having time to adapt. If these improvements, not to mention the potential real estate buildout, were being carried out by Vail or Alterra, these changes would occur over a much shorter time frame. Of course, the ideal scenario would be to enable our local ownership to plan and prioritize the most important of these improvements and slowly enact them over 30 years, while retaining the "Targhee Vibe."

I believe that concerns regarding the "view shed" and light pollution are also adequately mitigated in the DEIS. I could cite a hundred examples of why this should not be the objection to virtually any of the resorts' proposals. The logic that you might be able to see a lift from a national park is just comical. With that logic we should do away with the Tram at Jackson Hole, the Jackson Hole Airport, the infrastructure at Crystal Mountain Washington, Winter Park Colorado and Whitefish Montana. That's not even to mention Lake Louise and all the ski resorts among the five national parks of the Canadian Rockies and almost every lift in the Alps! If you read the documents around the DEIS, I think they do a good job of mitigating both of these topics to a reasonable degree. At the recent DEIS open house they did a mockup of the viewshed impacts on a big screen and you literally had to squint and go back and forth to even notice a difference. Just imagine if that made national news, how absurd it would sound? "Residents of a rural valley in Idaho are revolting against their own local ski resort and the forest service because they can SEE ski trails!" I'm guessing there would be a whole lot of confusion and not a lot of people crying for us upon hearing that news!

Another narrative being presented is that GTR is somehow to blame for all the growth, high housing costs and other socioeconomic issues in Teton Valley. This is more of a universal concern than any objection to the DEIS. There are a number of reasons for this trend that have nothing to do with the ski hill. We are a bedroom community for the Jackson workforce. The rise of remote work has given more people the option to live in the region. The proximity to Yellowstone and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is appealing to outdoor enthusiasts and pursuits such as fly fishing, mountain biking, hunting, off-highway recreation, paddleboarding and hiking have all acted as catalysts for growth in the region. We have seen private golf developments, including Tributary and Teton Springs, advertising far and wide including in the Wall Street Journal and in domestic air travel

magazines as far away as the eastern seaboard. Is anyone arguing that these developments are increasing housing prices and the appeal of the valley? I would highlight that the current ownership of GTR has made significant investments into the Teton County Idaho community and cares deeply about the valley where its employees live and spend their paychecks. An example of this is the 100+ units of employee housing that they built in Driggs as well as the commitment to the free bus service that runs daily all the way down to Victor. It's not in any way the fault of current ownership that the resort itself happens to sit and be taxed across the border in Wyoming! Those looking to punish the resort for this fact are missing the mark and should rather work to foster an open collaboration for the benefit of both jurisdictions.

Idaho has become one of the nations fastest growing states. It is simply an attractive place to be. Idaho lawmakers have aggressively reduced state income tax by over 2% in the last decade while also reducing barriers to business, which in turn draws even more folks from higher tax states. We are fortunate not to have the same natural disaster and weather perils that are driving folks here from oppressive heat, hurricanes or lack of snowfall. Our access to the outdoors is exceptional. GTR is just one of a hundred reasons why the demand for housing and services has increased. This demand won't go away regardless of whether GTR expands or stays exactly the same. To blame the resort on the post-covid increase in housing demand is quite self-serving for those who oppose the DEIS. Truth is, many of the new people I meet here don't even ski. They moved for the mountain town lifestyle and for the spring, summer and fall recreation which is abundant. If we accept that the future of the valley includes more people, then we need to allow the resort to grow with that demand to preserve the Targhee experience that we know and love.

The concept that a resort as large as GTR has no on-mountain dining options or facilities is highly atypical. I have skied at 103 different ski resorts in the US and abroad. Grand Targhee is one of the only resorts of its size with zero on-mountain dining. For this reason and for general business and guest experience purposes, I support both dining options presented at Sacajawea and at the top of Fred's. I trust GTR will work to make these structures visually appealing and minimize potential impacts to the environment.

In regard to wildlife, I fully acknowledge that I am no expert. That being said, I cannot reasonably believe that 866 acres for winter recreation adjacent to 434,000 acres of protected wilderness and National Parkland could somehow extinct any animal species in that ecosystem. In reading the results of the study, it seems that a "may affect" certain species was cited. One of the animals in that category was the grizzly bear. Our own officials in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana have argued the grizzly bear should be delisted as populations have sufficiently recovered. I trust the resort will cut down the minimum amount of trees to achieve their plans and their stewardship of the forest within Mono Trees might actually achieve a positive outcome in decreased wildfire risk. I appreciate that we're trying to protect wildlife as well as plant life in the ecosystem, but advocate for the approval of the South Bowl and Mono Trees SUP expansion as necessary to the future of Grand Targhee as a viable stand-alone resort and believe that the DEIS shows effective mitigation on this topic.

Public Access is a Core Principle of the Forest Service. It is explicitly designed to provide recreational opportunities for all Americans. Its motto, "Caring for the land and serving people," underscores the commitment to making these lands accessible for public use. The opposition says that allowing GTR to expand its borders, is an affront to this when the reality is that only a few hundred dedicated backcountry users actually ski terrain such as that in South Bowl. In allowing the expansion into South Bowl and Mono Trees, the forest service is helping to create the conditions for better accessibility to these beautiful slopes and views so that thousands more folks each year can enjoy them.

In summary, I hope this decision is made with reason and not emotion, and not intended to injure or unnecessarily limit GTR's promising future. The resort is integral to the community and allowing it to realize organic growth of infrastructure and services over the long-term, not only serves the greatest number of people, but ensures that as a business, it can stay competitive and continue to be a source of economic value in both counties. In addition to the SUP expansion, I fully support all lifts and infrastructure proposed within the current

SUP and find all proposals to be reasonable and equally exciting. Approving the DEIS and the long-term vision for GTR is the right decision. Reasonable residents, workers and visitors that love Grand Targhee thank you in advance for not allowing the loud and misguided few to dictate the trajectory of the resort growing with the region and continuing to offer the best single on snow experience in North America.