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First name: Ashley

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Organization: Pitkin County

Title: Community Resiliency Manager

Comments: Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams,

At a work session on October 26, 2022, the Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners supported the following comments regarding the NEPA of the proposed conveyance of the USFS parcel located in El Jebel. Density. The 2016 density number that is referenced in the NEPA is a rough estimate from a point in time that is not relevant nor feasible at this time and does not provide an accurate representation of future development options. The estimate does not consider site planning constraints, community engagement, existing site conditions, utility capacity and roadway capacity. The assumption that a full-build through a possible Planned Unit Development application is not supported by any of the community adopted plans that address this property. Additionally, this number was not produced through a third party consultant or process. Pitkin and Eagle Counties object to the use of the high density number that is used in the NEPA for any additional calculations or planning efforts associated with this parcel.

Full Acreage. The NEPA discusses the possibility of holding acreage back from a future sale or lease and indicates that USFS desires to convey less than the total available 28 acres. Pitkin and Eagle Counties object to any conveyance that holds acreage back. The intention of Pitkin and Eagle Counties is to develop the site to include three key uses: conservation, recreation, and low-density housing. Feedback provided during the Listening Sessions, conducted in the spring of 2021 from stakeholders and community members, clearly shows that these three uses strike an important balance for any future development of the site. USFS retaining any acreage would severely limit Pitkin and Eagle County's ability to deliver a development that provides for conservation, recreation and low density housing.

Additionally, previous approaches to a potential development that included both the upper and lower USFS owned parcels assumed that all of the lower parcel would be conserved. However, following the USFS decision to not include the lower parcel, all three components that were identified in the Listening Sessions (conservation, recreation and low-density housing) must be accommodated on the upper parcel. This furthers Pitkin and Eagle Countys' assertion that USFS retaining any acreage would severely limit the Countys' ability to deliver a development that includes conservation, recreation and low density housing.

Water Rights. The NEPA describes that the water rights associated with the upper parcel may be conveyed with the land. Pitkin and Eagle County ask that the water rights be included in the conveyance and would object to the water rights being severed from the land in a conveyance to the Counties. The elimination of water rights not only limits future development potential but also reduces that likelihood of future conservation and recreation uses.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Patti Clapper, Chair

Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners