

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/15/2018 10:10:31 PM

First name: George

Last name: Lawrence

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I strongly support the Camp May Rd pipeline project. It will be good for Los Alamos County and for the region as a whole, enabling reliable and enhanced snowmaking at Pajarito Mountain Ski Area and providing a substantial wildland fire protection resource.

The pipeline will ensure that the existing storage pond on top of the Mountain is filled to its 10-Mgal capacity every fall before snowmaking operations begin, supplementing whatever snowmelt runoff is collected the previous spring. What this means to the Ski Area is that opening for business during the critical Dec-Jan holiday period is guaranteed, with several slopes available for skiers and snowboarders. This will assure the Ski Area's future economic viability, and make it possible to have infrastructure investment for the first time in decades (new lifts, expanded snowmaking capability, and other improvements). Over a period of ten years or more, this could turn Pajarito Mountain into a first class (but still family oriented) ski area, and provide a significant economic boost to Los Alamos County, as well as a better staff-recruiting tool for LANL. If anyone wants to see what a difference good snowmaking can make, they should visit Sipapu Ski Area near Penasco during ski season. My friends and I skied there several times this past winter, and were very impressed with how many of their slopes were covered with adequate machine made snow, using just their modest water allotment pumped from the Rio del Pueblo. I believe it was the same story this dry winter for other NM Ski resorts, like Taos, Ski Santa Fe, Red River, and Angel Fire.

In terms of fire protection, the pipeline will assure that the mountain-top storage pond is full before the start of each fire season, as well as the existing 250,000-gallon fire-fighting tank near the base of the Ski Area. This tank, built by the County in 2009, basically saved the central part of the Ski Area during the Las Conchas fire, which unfortunately did do serious damage to the east and west flanks. Bucket-carrying helicopters will be able to easily access the storage pond for an essentially unlimited supply of water, providing improved fire-fighting capability for the local region, which will benefit the Forest Service and Bandelier, as well as Los Alamos County.

In the future there may indeed be some interest in residential or other development at the Mountain, which could be partly enabled by the pipeline's water supply. Some local citizens are justifiably concerned about this, but I have confidence that the County's rigorous Planning and Zoning process will provide ample community protection and plenty of opportunity for public input if this should ever happen.

Finally, I believe the impact of the pipeline itself and its construction on the local environment will be small. It will be mainly installed along the edge of the Camp May Road, within a previously disturbed zone, and buried below frostline, so completely out of sight except for the new storage tank and four small pumping stations. The pump stations will be insulated to keep equipment from freezing, which should make the noise levels nearly rather small. Construction should take only a few months, with the road being kept open the entire time, so the impact on Camp May and Pajarito Mountain users should be small.