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Comments: I wholeheartedly applaud the application Lutsen has put forward to expand the available winter recreation area it currently operates. Lutsen has been a treasure in northern Minnesota for decades, and has been used by multiple generations in my family. Allowing Lutsen to expand ensures that it remains one of the best ski destinations in the Midwest, which will in turn allow it to maintain or enhance its regional economic impact.

Lutsen regularly competes for recreational spending dollars from people throughout the Midwest who choose between going to a larger mountain destination for winter recreation or between keeping their dollars closer to home. Allowing Lutsen to expand will create the kind of impact that will bring more people to the area, adding jobs and bringing dollars into the entire region. It won't just be Lutsen/Tofte that benefits from this - Grand Marais and locations up and down Lake Superior's shoreline will experience higher traffic from tourism as the resort's appeal and capacity expand, to say nothing of the jobs this will bring to the area as the trails and support infrastructure as outlined in the proposal require.

Of course there is ecological impact to this expanded footprint, and I encourage the park system to evaluate that potential in a manner similar to what has been done for ski resorts throughout Colorado, Utah, California and more states in the country. They have been able to find a way to balance ecological goals with the expansion that ski resorts have experienced over the last several decades, and I do not see a reason that this cannot be done on Minnesota's North Shore, a region comparatively much lower in usage than places like Summit County in Colorado.

In short, this proposal has the potential to improve what is already a treasured North Shore destination and provide a general lift from its associated regional economic impact. Done correctly, ecological impact can be successfully minimized or perhaps entirely negated, and the region as a whole will benefit. This is the closest thing to a "slam dunk" proposal I have seen lately. Please allow this to proceed.