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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Pence,

As a valley resident, a member of local government, and a mountain recreationalist, I am concerned by the scope of the proposed Grand Targhee Master Development Plan Projects. I fear the expansion as proposed will accelerate negative change in our valley unless we take care to address its impacts on wildlife, air quality, water quality, transportation, housing and quality of life.

1. The one and only time I have skied in the South Bowl area, I encountered grizzly bear tracks in the snow. I am a more frequent visitor to Teton Canyon where moose, deer, and bear are common. I've talked to people who have seen bighorn sheep frequenting South Bowl. The area is also known to be habitat for goshawks, wolverine and other mammals. All this is to point out that Grand Targhee is surrounded by prime wildlife habitat and I am concerned that the proposal to push the resort's boundaries south would increase pressure on wildlife that is already experiencing critical habitat reduction and degradation. I think the effect of the three lifts proposed for the south side of the resort could be detrimental to wildlife, not to mention its encroachment on viewsheds and recreation in Teton Canyon. Furthermore, the increased traffic associated with the proposed growth may result in an increase in wildlife-vehicular collisions unless efforts are made to provide wildlife crossings in the proposal.

2. Grand Targhee stands adjacent to Grand Teton National Park, a Class I airshed protected under the Clean Air Act. I fear that the increase in emissions associated with the scale of growth proposed could have a negative effect on the area's air quality, which is already suffering from increased traffic associated with growth. I do not want to see any allowances made to allow this expansion that could negatively affect our air quality.

3. Targhee stands in the headwaters of Teton Valley's water sources. Runoff from the resort's expansion could degrade water quality in Teton Creek and in the underlying aquifer that supplies drinking water for valley residents. Furthermore, increase water use associated with resort expansion and snow-making could impact water availability and aquifer recharge. Also, the impact to wastewater treatment facilities of potential growth must be examined to ensure the Teton River watershed is not adversely affected by nitrates and other contaminants.

4. Teton Valley, Idaho, is currently struggling with the challenges of increased traffic on our roads, which were not built to handle current loads. Additionally, transportation is one of the county's leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to turn onto our highways because of the constant stream of cars. Adding to that stream will negatively affect safety and add to the woes of commuters trying to get to and from work each day. I have a friend who works as a nurse at St. John's in Jackson who says at times it has taken her two hours to commute home after a shift. This is untenable, and we cannot add to the problem by increasing traffic without improving our transportation system. Any expansion of Grand Targhee must include ways to mitigate the effects of traffic on our valley's quality of life, safety, and air quality. This means the plan must require alternative modes of transportation and financial support for road improvements.

5. The scale of the resort's proposed expansion means an influx in both tourists and workers, all of whom need to be housed. Teton Valley, Idaho, is already experiencing a shortage of affordable housing for its workers, which means any expansion of the resort and its associated population increase would exacerbate the problem. Grand

Targhee must include plans for housing this influx in people both by providing increased short-term options and long-term worker housing for its staff.

6. Finally, the impacts of Grand Targhee's proposed expansion on our valley's quality of life have the potential to be huge. Both those who have lived here all their lives and those of us who have moved here treasure the area for its quiet, small town, friendly atmosphere. Grand Targhee itself is known for being a funky, family resort that has no lift lines and where you can find lines of untracked powder days after a storm. We have low rates of crime, access to vast tracts of public land to recreate, incredible vistas, amazing wildlife, clean water, and dark skies full of stars. These are qualities that we treasure but which are already threatened by climate change and growth. Grand Targhee's expansion plan will accelerate changes and possibly increase their impacts. It's important that the Environmental Impact Statement include an analysis of the proposal's impacts on these more nebulous qualities that are so critical to our way of life.

I believe there are ways to modernize and improve Grand Targhee without have adverse effects on our valley, however, I believe the plan as proposed is too big, too rushed and too expansive to do that. I worry that the proposal is designed to accelerate development and the sale of real estate with no plan to mitigate its impact on Teton Valley's land, wildlife, environment, infrastructure and people.

Thanks for consideration of my comments,