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Organization:
Title:
Comments: [External Email]Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project

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Dear Ms. Cummins,

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to comment on the proposed Lutsen Mountains Ski Area Expansion Project. I am not environmental lawyer or very familiar with these kinds of documents, but your EIS seems thorough and unbiased.

My name is John Wood. I am a board member of Superior Highland Backcountry, a long time telemark and Nordic skier, a former resident of Cook County (who still owns a home in Cook County), and a frequent hiker on the SHT who loves the quiet and solace that green spaces and distant horizons give us. I was last on the SHT section of Moose Mountain and Rollins Creek in September 2021 when I ran the Superior 100. I know these trails and area well. I'm no stranger to Lutsen and have had my share of fun on cold powder days or carving turns in the creamy snowy slush under a bright spring sun.

Minnesota, while the land of 10,000 lakes, is not the land of 10,000 mountains, hills, or vertical feet. Moose Mountain's 750 vertical feet of skiable terrain is unique to Minnesota's North Shore that abuts Lake Superior. This is the last of its kind; the last wild, skiable remnant of the Wisconsin Glacier which retreated around 10,000 years ago. The Lutsen Mountain Corporation's (LMC) Alternatives 2 and 3 would irreversibly and irretrievably alter this unique and irreplaceable geographic feature. For hikers and trail runners, the Moose Mountain segment of the SHT that straddles the spine of Moose Mountain would be irreversibly lost under Alternatives 2 and 3, its character forever altered. Future generations, would, I think, wonder about the wisdom of a people that allowed this resource to be forever lost.

Having lived and worked in Cook County for many years, I am also familiar with the struggles of many who are searching for affordable housing within a reasonable distance of their work. I know of many people who worked at Lutsen and needed to live in Hovland or Finland as they could not find reasonable housing in Lutsen, Tofte, Schroeder, or even Grand Marais. LMC's Alternatives 2 and 3 do not address these externalities. The irretrivable environmental impacts due to the longer commutes are as real as the direct impacts to Moose Mountain and Eagle Mountain from the proposed development, but perhaps not as measurable.

While I recognize that this may be beyond the scope of the EIS, the additional pressure on housing caused by this project should be considered. Cook County is already at housing capacity and creative solutions to this issue should, I think, be a part of any proposed project of this magnitude. The economic benefits of this project, while certainly real and measurable, need to be balanced against the pressure this development puts on the housing and infrastructure resources of Cook and Lake County.

For these reasons, please choose the "No Action' for the proposed Special Use Permit for a Lutsen Mountains Resort expansion.

Thank You,

John Wood

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