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

[External Email]

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Dear Sir/Madam:

As a property owner in the Lutsen area, backcountry user, and longtime downhill skier at Lutsen Mountains , I have followed the proposed expansion of Lutsen Mountains closely. I would whole heartedly support viable and sensible upgrades to Lutsen Mountains, but that is not what is being proposed. This is an apparent attempt to gain exclusive use of a large section of public land for an extended period of time without a viable plan of what they really intend to do with it. I am opposed to both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3. As identified in the Draft EIS Alternative 2 has a "variety of resource concerns" including, if it is built as planned, being detrimental to the Superior Hiking Trail. Alternative 3 is heavily based on there being a large increase in skier usage with the addition of more beginner and low level intermediate terrain - which is unlikely. The current ski runs Lutsen has on Mystery Mountain have some nice beginner and low level intermediate terrain, yet there have been no upgrades to the lift or runs on Mystery Mountain in the 25 years I have been skiing there. The Mystery Mountain lift is seldom operating when I have skied Lutsen recently. If they actually believed there was a large demand for more beginner and low level intermediate runs I would think they would have done at least some minimal upgrades to Mystery Mountain. In the Minneapolis Star and Tribune October 23, 2021, Jim Vick, marketing and operations manager for Lutsen Mountains, is quoted as saying "Whether it gets fully built out as drawn up, I would be surprised". So what will actually happen if either Alternative 2 or Alternative 3 is approved? Will they sell to an organization like Vail Resorts and get a higher price because they control more land? Will they create more runs on the public land they gain and then use some of the private land they own to develop for condos, etc.? Hiking, mountain biking, back country skiing and general back county usage are all activities which this land can be used for and have seen large increases in demand the last several years. Keep this land so future generations can use it for a variety of activities.

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