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Comments: I am an active member of Central Washington Mountain Rescue, and of Yakima County SAR. I cannot speak for either of these organizations, but I am well acquainted with their operation and values. I frequently enjoy hiking in areas surrounding the Rimrock basin, often with views of Jump Off Point. I've recently become a private pilot and I intend to use the Tieton airstrip in the future (some had mentioned the effect on pilots). I also used to live in several eastern states where there is virtually no wilderness or areas without the human touch.

I recognize the convenience to first responders and law enforcement, and the increase in safety to the public offered by the proposed tower. I also recognize that a convenience to law enforcement and first responders often equates to added safety for the public. I believe the best intentions of the FirstNet objective are served by this project only because it fills long gaps in cell coverage (distinct from broadband) along a major highway connecting the east and west halves of our state. Many of those who drive White Pass do so out of necessity, and are not there for the unspoiled surroundings that exist along much of the route.

However, I am also keenly aware that most public entities have not yet gained the language and metrics necessary to quantify and recognize a disappearing resource - The wild. Bear in mind, it is with this same procedure and notion of improving safety that someone will one day "fix" the last remaining piece of wild terrain on Earth.

I squarely disagree with the notion that the local of visiting public is served by extending cell or broadband coverage into undeveloped areas (I'm no longer referring to Hwy-12) - areas in which the majority of human visitors expect to leave coverage, and a large fraction are there to escape it (consciously or not).

If alcohol gave people the ability to communicate over distances, should we ensure free booze at regular intervals along every forest road and trail? My point is that connectedness (especially data service) is addictive to many and deeply unhealthy in excess. Wilderness is important for so many reasons apart from this, but if we must start here, I hope governments can begin to more formally recognize wilderness as an unmatched public resource as a refuge from over-connectedness. This resource is simultaneously becoming more needed as our average screen-time grows, and more scarce as we broadcast deeper into the trees.

Outdoor recreators already have unprecedented access to the backup safety of satellite links, and they are using them at a rapidly increasing rate. If (when) one day satellite connectivity eliminates the data-refuge of the wild when cost/bandwidth drops to the point that it replaces ground based infrastructure, then this tower will just be another decaying metal thing we put on the skyline.

In summary, I believe that because of significant gaps along US-12, an 80 ft tower at Jump Off Point would likely be a net benefit to our community and those who visit, but just barely:)

Thanks you for the opportunity to comment, and thank you for reading.

-Daniel Muller