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First name: John

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

As a homeowner and parciante of Valdez the San Antonio Acequia, downriver along the Rio Hondo of Taos Ski Valley, I am extremely concerned about the "Taos Ski Valley Gondola and Other Improvements Project."

Valdez and the other communities along the Rio Hondo are cultural strongholds in New Mexico. For hundreds of years, the community has depended on the Hondo for drinking water, agriculture, and feeding its acequia. Many of the same families that first settled here continue to rely on the river to water their farms and fruit trees.

But the heart of this village, and this historical practice, are in danger. We know that climate change will only worsen the extreme drought the Southwest is experiencing. We need to do everything possible to prepare for this future. Building a gondola directly up the Rio Hondo, in addition to the five-million gallon water tank and other proposed lodges outlined in this project, will only hasten the loss of this essential resource by decreasing water quality and quantity.

I want to be clear: I am not anti-development. There are ways the ski valley needs to evolve, and I believe some of the development projects outlined in the plan are necessary, like the cross-country trails that will provide more accessible outdoor recreation access.

What we need in Taos Ski Valley is accountability of its water use and its impact on water quality. The watershed is already one of the most heavily-trafficked areas in the state. What this essential ecosystem demands, in the face of drought and climate change and a tourism explosion, is not vanity development projects, but monitoring stations throughout the valley that ensure efficient and reasonable water use and safe, healthy waters that are essential habitat and resources for this special corner of New Mexico.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Clary Davies