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Comments: The decision by the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) to exempt the Holland Lake Lodge Facility Improvement and Expansion project from full project review and comment by the public is unacceptable, and legally tenuous. According to the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, this project warrants the completion of an Environmental Assessment, which may further justify the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Project proponents have failed to account for numerous potential project impacts, including the alteration or removal of historical buildings and artifacts, alterations in demands on local infrastructural facilities, including roads, power distribution, emergency response, and waste disposal, increased hazards to human health, disruption of habitat and migratory corridors for wildlife species, destruction of wildlife and plant habitat, compromise of surface and ground water quality and quantity, noise, soil, and air pollution, and cumulative impacts related to increased human impacts in the immediate lodge area as well as regional impacts. Full assessments of these and other potential impacts should be completed in order to provide a full disclosure of all project-related actions and how they will or could affect the environment, and to provide for public review of the project and the opportunities to comment.

I have two decades of experience as a federal and state employee, and as a concerned citizen, in reviewing proposed projects for potential environmental impacts. Far too often I have found environmental reviews by public agencies to be inadequate, incomplete, and hastily completed, with resulting impacts that were not disclosed in project proposals, nor during subsequently incomplete project reviews. As a frequent visitor to national parks and forests, I have also borne direct witness to the results of inadequate environmental compliance, peer review, and public comment. These public lands belong to all of us, not just those seeking to profit from publicly held property.

I strongly urge the USFS to reconsider its decision to categorically exempt this project and proceed with an Environmental Assessment, and if warranted, the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Peter Warner