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First name: Jill

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service:

As a long time resident of Valdez, NM, which is located not far below the Taos Ski Valley on the Rio Hondo, i am very concerned by the proposal that you are considering to enlarge and change the ski area. From what i gather, you have not considered comments by citizens such as myself. Neighbors and friends concur that an Environmental Impact Statement is critical, in analyzing alternatives to the TSVI proposal. It is not necessary to build a gondola, an enormous water holding tank for snow making, and booster station.

TSVI water rights are an extremely important factor. Their allocation of 0.11 acre feet of daily use during operation using is not reflected in their proposal of 200 acre feet usage. The watershed does not support that kind of consumption, and water being our most precious resource, it seems very unfair that a corporate entity be allowed to use the water that we depend upon downstream in villages such as the one i reside in, which is historically a farming community. We depend upon this water. How does the TSV intend to deal with an even higher amount of waste water and septic use? We do not want our river(s) to be further polluted by an industry that caters to wealthy outsiders, while our voices are ignored. We know the TSV already faces water infrastructure issues, and has closed as a result more than once this season.

Not all of us local residents have the monetary means to purchase gondola tickets to get to trailheads that we have cherished for many decades. To think that i cannot hike the trails to Williams Lake, Wheeler Peak, or the Columbine area, is totally unacceptable and unimaginable. I am certain that they will not offer reduced or free rates to us locals, judging by the greedy imperatives that they have established. These are OUR public lands, they are not owned by the corporation, and we want access. We do not need a gondola, we have enjoyed the ski area for many years without one.

By my way of thinking, the water issues are critical and need to be addressed to satisfy the reality that exists before building a 5 million gallon water tank, booster station, restaurant, and gondola. We do not feel that the impacts of these proposed changes have been considered, both for the environment and our access to clean water and way of life here. This is a fragile ecosystem, and deserves more respect and consideration before quietly and quickly approving these big changes! Please do not give a green light to this without more input, information and unbiased assessment of this proposal.

Thank you for reading my letter, i am heartbroken and infuriated at the very idea of all of this.

Take the time to construct an EIS, and not go with the EA which does not take into account all of the factors mentioned in my letter.