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Comments: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Grand Targhee Resort's proposed expansion. While I am not a full-time resident, I have owned land in Teton Valley for the past four years and am beginning to build a home here. My family and I spend considerable time in the valley and care deeply about its long-term health and sustainability.

1. Expansion Beyond Current Boundaries Is Unwarranted

Targhee's current skiable terrain is underutilized compared to its capacity. Terrain rarely feels crowded-even on peak days-and the proposed expansion into South Bowl and Ricks Basin would fragment valuable wildlife habitat and negatively impact quiet-use areas. These undeveloped areas are vital for maintaining ecological integrity and the backcountry character of the region.

2. Support for Alternative 3 (with Modifications)

I encourage adoption of Alternative 3, which focuses improvements within the existing operational boundary. This is a more balanced approach that still addresses skier experience through improved lifts and mid-mountain amenities. However, the North Boundary Lift into Ricks Basin and the ridgeline restaurant should be removed from the plan. These elements would degrade sensitive areas and diminish the Nordic and wilderness-adjacent experience.

3. Inter-County Equity Must Be Addressed

As highlighted in the 2022 ECONorthwest study, Teton County, ID bears the burden of infrastructure impacts-roads, emergency services, waste management-while Teton County, WY and the resort retain most of the economic benefit. Growth without the means to support it is not sustainable, and this imbalance must be considered in the final decision.

4. Focus on Existing Capacity and Transit Solutions

The resort's challenges are primarily at the base: parking, facilities, and access. I support investment in transit solutions, such as a more accessible bus system that includes Alta. Mid-mountain dining could also relieve pressure at the base. These improvements do not require terrain expansion.

5. Protect Teton Canyon and Limit Avalanche Bombing

Expanding into South Bowl would require more extensive avalanche control, including the use of explosives. This would dramatically increase noise and disturbance in Teton Canyon, a treasured and relatively quiet-use winter area. The effect on wildlife and human users would be significant and long-lasting.

Conclusion

Please advocate for a responsible and ecologically sound approach. Support in-bound improvements where needed, but do not expand the operational footprint into undeveloped terrain. Protect public lands, ensure infrastructure costs are equitably addressed, and preserve the character of this unique mountain region.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Deeanne Akerson