

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/16/2025 10:52:29 PM

First name: Garret

Last name: Akerson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Grand Targhee Resort's proposed expansion. I'm not a full-time resident (yet), but my family and I have owned land in Teton Valley for the past four years and recently began building a home here. We spend a significant amount of time in the valley and are deeply invested in its future, not just as a place to visit, but as a community we're choosing to call home.

I'd like to offer a few thoughts based on our experience and values:

1. Expansion Beyond the Current Boundary Isn't Necessary

Even on peak days, Targhee's current skiable terrain handles traffic well. The resort doesn't feel overrun, and that's part of what makes it so special. Proposing expansion into South Bowl and Ricks Basin would disrupt ecologically sensitive areas and permanently alter the quiet, backcountry feel that defines this place. Once you push infrastructure into those undeveloped zones, you can't undo it. We'd lose something essential - not just for wildlife, but for the soul of the mountain.

2. Alternative 3 (With Some Key Adjustments) Is the Right Path

I support the general approach of Alternative 3, which focuses improvements within the existing operational boundary. That makes sense, targeted upgrades to lifts, mid-mountain amenities, and skier services can improve the guest experience without expanding the footprint. That said, I strongly recommend removing the proposed North Boundary Lift into Ricks Basin and the ridgeline restaurant. These additions would disrupt the natural rhythm of the landscape and diminish the Nordic, wilderness-adjacent experiences many of us come here for.

3. Inter-County Equity Can't Be Ignored

As the 2022 ECONorthwest study made clear, the impacts of growth don't stop at the state line. Teton County, Idaho is already absorbing the brunt of the infrastructure strain: roads, emergency services, waste management, while most of the economic upside stays on the Wyoming side. If we're going to talk about sustainable development, we have to address this imbalance head-on. Anything less perpetuates a pattern that's not only inequitable, but ultimately unsustainable.

4. Focus Resources Where the Real Bottlenecks Are

The base area is where the pain points are most visible: parking, traffic flow, facility congestion. Those are the issues affecting day-to-day experience. Transit expansion, including better access to and from Alta, would make a real difference. Mid-mountain food options could also help redistribute demand. None of this requires additional terrain, just smarter investment in what's already there.

5. Protect Teton Canyon from Noise and Overuse

Expanding into South Bowl would mean increased avalanche control, more explosives, more helicopter noise, more human intrusion. That might be manageable from a logistics standpoint, but it comes at a steep cost to Teton Canyon, one of the valley's most cherished quiet-use areas. The effect on wildlife and human users, backcountry skiers, snowshoers, families, isn't just seasonal; it's long-term and hard to reverse.

Final Thought

Growth doesn't have to mean sprawl. We have a chance here to model a different kind of development, one that protects the things that make this region extraordinary while still allowing for thoughtful, strategic improvements. I urge you to adopt a plan that reflects long-term stewardship, inter-county fairness, and a deep respect for the

land.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Best regards,
Garret Akerson
Teton Valley (Part-Time Resident)