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First name: John

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it may concern,

My name is John, and I have lived in Teton Basin, full-time, for the past 29 years. I love the Tetons, and I have enjoyed many memorable days at Grand Targhee Ski Resort (Targhee). Targhee is the only place besides Teton Pass, where one may drive a car above 8000' and enjoy the upper elevations of the Tetons. The Teton range is relatively small in area, and very narrow from East to West. One can easily view Jackson Hole and Teton Basin from high altitude peaks. Being relatively small and narrow, the Tetons are easily impacted by human activity. Finding solitude and escaping the things of man becomes increasingly difficult in today's world.

I believe it would be a great loss to cede any more land to development in this precious natural wonder we call the Tetons. That being said, I support Alternative 1: No Action. No new development or upgrades within the current ski area. I believe it was a mistake to allow private ownership of land at such a high altitude in the Tetons. We have already sacrificed too much of our public land. We should not allow 866 more acres of public land to be privatized.

Targhee already negatively impacts trees and wildlife in critical, limited habitat. Construction of new lifts and roads would further damage alpine ecosystems, old growth trees, white bark forests, and watersheds. Habitat for grizzly bears, lynx, wolverines, bighorn sheep, and raptors will be fragmented or destroyed by further development. I would argue that there is inadequate and missing data related to wildlife habitat in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

New restaurants and increased snow-making at Targhee would increase water use in a climate stressed region. The DEIS has inadequate information regarding water sustainability in current and future climate conditions. I believe further study should be given to waste water treatment at Targhee.

Teton Basin already suffers from congested highways and stressed community resources. I believe a full traffic and safety study for year-round use should be conducted before considering any of the proposals for development in the DEIS.

Affordable housing is almost non-existent in Teton Basin. One must be wealthy to even rent housing in Teton Basin, let alone buy something in today's market. Community services, like emergency, medical, fire and waste will be overburdened by increased development. I believe an assessment of affordable housing and community services should be conducted before considering any development proposals.

Development at Targhee would increase light and noise pollution. Visual impacts from ski runs, lifts and facilities will detract from the scenery and solitude in Grand Teton National Park and Jedediah Smith Wilderness. Teton Canyon is a world class hiking area, and Table Mountain is one of the most popular ascents in the Tetons. It would be a shame to see ski lifts and roads cuts from these pristine areas. As stated earlier, the Tetons are relatively small. I believe we should preserve this very limited resource.

Allowing Targhee to expand would increase negative impacts on wildlife, trees and Teton County, Idaho. Human desire and convenience, far too often supersede the rest of the natural world. Please make a choice for the environment, trees, flowers and animals with whom we share this earth. I encourage you to put humans second for a change.

Sincerely,

John