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First name: Sandra

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Officials,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Grand Targhee Resort expansion as outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. As a landowner and concerned citizen, I urge you to reject this proposal based on its significant negative impacts to wildlife habitat and the livability of Teton Valley.

#### Primary Concern: Devastating Wildlife Impacts

The proposed expansion would cause irreversible harm to critical wildlife habitat in an area already under severe pressure from development and recreation. My specific concerns include:

- Bighorn Sheep Habitat Loss: The expansion directly threatens isolated populations of bighorn sheep that rely on the South Bowl area for essential winter range. These populations are already struggling, and any further habitat loss could push them toward local extinction. The Forest Service has a responsibility to protect these native species rather than facilitate their decline.
- Fragmentation of Wildlife Corridors: The 900-acre boundary expansion toward the Jedediah Smith Wilderness Area would fragment critical wildlife movement corridors. This fragmentation isolates populations, reduces genetic diversity, and compromises the long-term viability of species.
- Cumulative Habitat Loss: Wildlife in the Teton Valley region have already lost substantial habitat to human development. The proposed expansion would eliminate approximately one-third of habitat enhancement projects in the area and severely compromise the effectiveness of remaining wildlife habitat initiatives.
- Proximity to Protected Wilderness: Expanding commercial ski operations so close to designated wilderness areas violates the spirit of wilderness protection and creates a dangerous precedent for future development pressures on our most protected public lands.

#### Secondary Concern: Threats to Teton Valley Livability

The massive scale of this expansion-doubling skier capacity and adding seven new lifts-would fundamentally alter the character and livability of Teton Valley:

Infrastructure Strain: The proposed expansion would place enormous stress on local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and emergency services that are already stretched thin. Rural communities should not bear the burden of supporting massive commercial developments.

Housing and Affordability Crisis: Large-scale resort expansion historically drives up housing costs and displaces local residents. Our community members-including teachers, healthcare workers, and other essential workers-are already struggling with housing affordability.

Loss of Community Character: Teton Valley's appeal lies in its rural character, open spaces, and connection to the natural environment. Massive commercial expansion threatens to transform our community into another overdeveloped resort destination.

#### Conclusion

The Grand Targhee expansion proposal represents exactly the kind of short-sighted development that our public lands management should reject. The temporary economic benefits to a private corporation cannot justify the permanent loss of critical wildlife habitat and the degradation of community livability.

I strongly urge you to select the "No Action" alternative in your final Environmental Impact Statement. Our public forests should be managed for the long-term benefit of wildlife, local communities, and future generations-not for the profit maximization of private resort operators.

Thank you for considering these comments. I look forward to your rejection of this harmful proposal.

Sincerely,

Sandra Zalewski

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