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First name: Ron

Last name: James

Organization: Teton County Board of Commissioners

Title: Commissioner

Comments: As a Commissioner for Teton County, Idaho, I am writing to express my support for the proposed expansion of Grand Targhee Resort as detailed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Grand Targhee is a key economic engine for our region, providing essential jobs, attracting year-round tourism, and helping sustain a broad range of local businesses. I also want to emphasize that this type of growth brings with it real costs for rural counties like ours [mdash] especially when we lack the tools to manage increased demand on public services, infrastructure, housing, and emergency response. As visitation grows [mdash] driven in large part by destinations like Grand Targhee [mdash] so does the strain on our roads, law enforcement, EMS, trailheads, solid waste systems, and workforce housing. That is why we not only support the resort's expansion, but also respectfully urge the State of Idaho to consider enabling legislation that would allow counties like Teton to implement a modest local-option lodging tax. This is a tool used successfully in many other Western states, and it would help ensure that some of the economic benefit of increased tourism is reinvested in the communities that host it. The proposed Grand Targhee expansion is thoughtfully designed and rooted in years of public input and environmental analysis. We trust the Forest Service and the resort will continue to mitigate impacts to public lands and wildlife while supporting economic vitality. But without legislative support to help us address the pressures that come with growth, the burden on local taxpayers will only increase. We appreciate your work and your commitment to collaborative planning. Teton County stands ready to work with the Forest Service, Grand Targhee, and state policymakers to create a more balanced and sustainable future for our region. Sincerely, Commissioner Ron James Teton County, Idaho