Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/25/2026 7:04:21 PM
First name: Luis
Last name: Barraza
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Re: Brian Head Resort Expansion Project #292353, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and proposed Forest Plan amendment, Dixie National Forest

To Forest Supervisor Kevin Wright and the Cedar City Ranger District:

My name is Luis Barraza. I own a condo in Brian Head, and my family and I use the snowmobile trails around Brian Head very regularly throughout the winter. Riding the groomed trail system is one of the main reasons we own property here. I am writing to ask that the existing snowmobile trails be kept, in full, as part of whatever decision is made on this project.

I am not writing to oppose the resort. A healthy Brian Head Resort is good for the town and for everyone who visits. My concern is specific: the draft EIS describes the proposed action eliminating about 5 miles of state-managed snowmobile routes and re-routing an existing snowmobile route to avoid new ski runs and infrastructure. Those trails are not a side detail for families like mine. They are a big part of why we bought a condo here, and why we buy fuel and food and spend our winter weekends in Brian Head instead of somewhere else. Property owners like us chose Brian Head knowing these trails were here.

1. Keep the existing snowmobile routes, with no net loss of mileage

I ask that the Forest Service select an alternative, or modify the proposed action, so that there is no net loss of snowmobile trail mileage in the Brian Head area. If 5 miles of state-managed routes are removed inside the expanded permit boundary, an equal or greater mileage of groomed, connected trail should be provided outside it before the existing routes are closed. Please state this as a binding requirement in the Record of Decision and the special use permit, not as a recommendation.

2. Any reroute must be equal to or better than what exists today

If a route has to move, the replacement should:
- Be built, signed and groomed before the existing route is closed, so there is no season without a trail.
- Keep the same connections. Riders depend on continuous routes that link Brian Head to the wider groomed network in the area. A reroute that breaks a connection, or forces riders onto a plowed highway or a ski run, is a loss even if the mileage looks the same on paper.
- Match the current experience: similar grade, width and scenery, with no steep, narrow or avalanche-prone substitutes.
- Stay open for the full season, not only on days that suit resort operations.

3. Keep trailhead access and parking

Snowmobile trails only work if people can reach them with a truck and trailer. Please make sure the expansion, its parking plans and the new development along State Route 143 do not remove or shrink snowmobile staging areas and trailhead parking. If existing staging is affected, replacement parking should be provided in the same area and in place before the change.

4. Safety where ski terrain and snowmobile routes meet

With 14 new lifts, 359 acres of new ski trails and up to 10 miles of new administrative roads, there will be more

places where skiers, resort vehicles and snowmobiles come close together. I ask the Forest Service to require:
- Clear physical separation between snowmobile routes and ski runs, with fencing or buffers where they run near each other.
- Designated, signed and grade-separated or well-marked crossings where a crossing cannot be avoided.
- A plan, agreed with the Utah State Parks and Recreation snowmobile program, for how grooming, signage and closures will be handled on and near the permit area.

5. Analyze the effect on winter motorized recreation, and on the local economy

The draft EIS lists changes to the quality and variety of recreation opportunities as an issue to analyze. Winter motorized recreation should be analyzed as its own use, not folded into skiing. I ask that the final EIS:
- Map every existing snowmobile route and staging area inside and next to the proposed boundary, and show exactly which segments are removed, moved or crossed.
- Quantify current snowmobile use, using grooming records and trail counts from the state snowmobile program.
- Account for the money snowmobilers bring to Brian Head and Iron County in the winter: lodging, rentals, guided tours, fuel, food and retail. Losing trail access would cost businesses that are not part of the resort.
- Consider an alternative that shifts or trims ski terrain, lifts or roads to avoid the existing routes.

6. The Forest Plan amendment should not reduce winter motorized access

The project includes a proposed amendment to the Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Please make sure the amendment does not reduce the area open to over-snow vehicles, or the designated snowmobile routes, beyond the permit boundary itself, and that any change to over-snow vehicle designations goes through its own clear public process.

7. Keep us informed

Please keep me on the mailing list for this project, including the final EIS, the draft Record of Decision and any objection period, and any later decision about over-snow vehicle routes in the Brian Head area.

Summary of what I am asking for:
- No net loss of snowmobile trail mileage around Brian Head.
- Any reroute built and groomed before the old route closes, with the same connections.
- Staging areas and trailhead parking kept or replaced in place.
- Safe separation and marked crossings between ski terrain and snowmobile routes.
- A full analysis of winter motorized recreation and its economic value in the final EIS.
- These commitments written into the Record of Decision and the special use permit.

Brian Head can grow its ski resort and keep its snowmobile trails at the same time. Please choose the path that does both.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to comment.

Luis Barraza