



October 20, 2025

Mike Kaputa
Director, Chelan County Natural Resources Department
411 Washington St., Suite 201
Wenatchee, WA 98801

sent via email to: missionridgeeis@outlook.com

RE: Mission Ridge Expansion Master Planned Resort Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Kaputa,

On behalf of the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), I am writing to express our strong support for the Mission Ridge Ski and Board Resort Expansion project as outlined in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). NSAA is a nationwide trade organization that supports and represents over 330 ski areas. We regularly engage with master plan development issues like those addressed in the Mission Ridge DEIS.

Mission Ridge is a critical community and regional asset. Its proposed expansion represents a balanced and forward-looking approach that will deliver substantial economic benefits, create jobs, boost tourism, and enhance recreational access for residents and visitors throughout central Washington. The project strengthens the Wenatchee Valley's outdoor economy and expands opportunities for year-round, human-powered recreation.

Ski areas nationwide — and Mission Ridge in particular — are recognized leaders in wildfire mitigation and forest health management. Expansion of operational areas allows for more proactive fuels reduction activities, including strategic glading, thinning, and vegetation management that reduce wildfire risk and improve overall ecosystem resilience. In addition, the resort's snowmaking systems and water infrastructure can provide critical suppression capacity during emergencies, complementing state and federal firefighting resources. Ski areas regularly coordinate with land managers and emergency agencies through mutual aid agreements, reinforcing their role as trusted partners in safeguarding natural resources and nearby communities.

The Mission Ridge expansion also reflects a commitment to sustainable development through upgraded infrastructure that meets modern standards, ensures safe and reliable access, and

diversifies year-round recreational offerings. These improvements will not only increase participation in outdoor activities across age groups and ability levels but also ensure that the resort remains a resilient and reliable anchor for the rural economy.

In light of these benefits, NSAA encourages DEIS reviewers to consider the demonstrated role of ski areas in wildfire mitigation, fuels management, and community resilience when evaluating the Mission Ridge Expansion proposal. Specifically, please consider how:

- Ski areas function as partners in wildfire management and climate resilience through ongoing mitigation practices and emergency support capacity.
- Proactive fuels management within and adjacent to ski area boundaries reduces risk and improves forest health.
- Ski area operations integrate naturally into regional fire and climate planning, strengthening coordination across agencies.
- Snowmaking and grooming systems can be leveraged in emergency response planning to enhance public safety.

The Mission Ridge expansion is a forward-thinking project that will bring enduring value to the Wenatchee Valley by enhancing recreation, improving community safety, and supporting long-term environmental resilience. On behalf of the NSAA, I strongly support its approval.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Reitzell', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Michael Reitzell
President & CEO
National Ski Areas Association