

Oct. 21, 2025

Mike Kaputa, Director
Chelan County Department of Natural Resources
SEPA Responsible Official
missionridgeeis@outlook.com
411 Washington St. Suite 201
Wenatchee, WA, 98801

RE: Mission Ridge Master Planned Resort Expansion
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Concerns

Dear Mr. Kaputa,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft EIS for the Mission Ridge Expansion. I am a fourth generation skier in the Squilchuck basin. I grew up skiing the same terrain my grandparents and great grandparents skied. I was on skis as soon as I could follow my mom to her job on ski patrol and I raced for the Mission Ridge ski team. Ski instructing at Mission Ridge was one of my first jobs after college. I believe that the proposed expansion of Mission Ridge will put our skiing community and the greater community at risk. I urge you to support the **No Action Alternative**.

The DEIS is deficient regarding detrimental impacts to wildlife and native plants, increased water use in headwaters, elevated wildfire risk and lack of safe escape routes, climate change impacts, and traffic impacts on roads that are not compliant with county codes. This proposed expansion does not meet Chelan County Code requirements and will cause more harm than good for our community.

Impacts to wildlife and plant species

The project area provides important habitat for migrating elk, golden eagle, pika, and goshawk. The DEIS did not adequately survey for these species and inaccurately claims that several of these are not present.

Two plant species on the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) list are within the development footprint, *Anemone patens* and *Pinus albicaulis*, and need additional research in the EIS.

Lack of adequate water and water percolating soils

The DEIS acknowledges the likelihood of water rights disputes and allocations to senior rights holders, due to limited capacity within the basin. The DEIS inaccurately assumes homeowners in the new development will only reside there when water is plentiful in

winter, ignoring the speed with which this valley is growing and that there are likely to be many year-round residents who will be using water year-round. This will directly negatively impact the amount of water available for fish and wildlife, downstream irrigators, and storage in the fire protection reservoir.

Basalt bedrock within the development footprint is not capable of supporting the proposed septic systems. As such, septic runoff will contaminate groundwater. The EIS lacks a soil profile analysis showing required water percolating soils for septic feasibility.

Inadequate fire protection plan

I grew up in a house that nearly burned down every few years, and I worked for 10 years as a wildland firefighter with the US Forest Service. I am surprised at how many people are unaware that toxic gases kill people in fires prior to flames. The idea proposed in the DEIS that residents could shelter in place elucidates a fundamental misunderstanding of fire. Residents would need to evacuate in the event of a wildfire, and the Mission Ridge Road would not adequately support the traffic, leading to a potential catastrophe. The terrain traps and dense forests in this area would put firefighters lives at risk.

The EIS Fire Protection Plan does not comply with the expert advice from AEGIS Engineering who describes this location as not suitable for urban development.

Page 5: Fire Hazards: The isolated location of the Mission Ridge site presents inherent challenges with regard to access for emergency responders in event of an emergency. The topography around the subject development area ranges from about 25%-100% slopes, contributing to the extreme conditions present at the site. A compounding factor is the extreme seasonal climatic conditions, which contribute to snow accumulation during the winter months and potential wildfires in the summer. Primary fire hazards contemplated involve structures and vehicles within the development, as well as wildland fires approaching from outside the site.

The report is clear in the lack of certainty due to incomplete knowledge of how the ground water and surface-water flows in the Squilchuck Creek drainage interact, vary, and how groundwater recharge occurs. Chelan County needs to hire a hydrologist to evaluate the report and to incorporate climate-change forecasts.

Inadequate road

Squilchuck Road is a 28 foot wide Rural Collector which county code identifies as supporting 1,500-4,000 average daily trips per day. The developer predicts 10,000 vehicle trips/day, vastly more than allowed in Chelan County Code. Additionally, the Chelan County Comprehensive Plan Goal 1.9 is “...deny approval of any development proposal that

would cause a roadway segment to fall below the adopted minimum level of service...". The EIS states that the developer plans to retain the 28-foot road, in violation of County Code.

I have limited my comments to my primary concerns with the DEIS as relates to the proposed expansion of Mission Ridge. I urge you to support the No Action Alternative.

Sincerely,

Lisa Foster

Restoration Biologist, Trout Unlimited

4th generation Chelan County resident and skier

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