



54 Portsmouth Street
Concord, NH 03301

Tel. 603.224.9945
Fax 603.228.0423

info@forestsociety.org
www.forestsociety.org

September 22, 2014

Commissioner Jeff Rose
NH Department of Resources and Economic Development
172 Pembroke Road
PO Box 1856
Concord, NH 03302-1856

Dear Commissioner Rose:

This letter is written in reply to your request for comments at the August 26 public hearing and Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee meeting held jointly at Mount Sunapee State Park. Attached is a copy of comments I presented orally at the hearing. After considering the presentations made that evening, please accept this letter as a set of supplemental comments from the Forest Society.

As I said at the hearing, we think there are a number of questions that must be asked and answered by the State before a well informed decision on the proposed five year master development plan presented by the Mount Sunapee Resort can be acted on. Our concerns, and the balance of this letter, are specifically addressed at the proposed "West Bowl" development.

The first question that must be asked and answered is one the State (specifically the Department of Resources and Economic Development) must ask of itself: Is any further expansion of current ski operations and facilities at Mount Sunapee prudent and desirable, and by what set of decision-making criteria does the State answer this question? There are a host of issues which DRED should explore relative to impacts on land use, natural resources, transportation infrastructure, regional economic development and other landowners in the vicinity of the project. If the State's conclusion after fully vetting this question is that no expansion is prudent and desirable, then the short answer to the proposal to expand is "no."

If the State concludes based on a full and thoughtful review that an expansion is prudent and desirable, then there are a set of questions we recommend that DRED raise and answer with the Mount Sunapee Resort, questions that are not addressed in the draft Master Development Plan (MDP). Here is a short list we offer:

- Is it preferable from the State's perspective for the State to own all the land on which all new west bowl lifts and trails would be built, to enable the Mount Sunapee ski operation to be one entity, on state owned land, leased in its entirety by the State to one lessee? If so, is the Resort open to such an arrangement?
- If the State did not own the Goshen land on which new lifts, trails and ski lodge would be built, who would? And, what legal and operational agreements would be necessary to successfully merge a ski lease on public lands with a private ski facility on private land?

- Who will finance the west bowl development, and where will the dollars come from to build the project?
- Will there be a buffer zone between the expanded ski operation and surrounding private residential property, as presently exists or as may exist in the future?
- Is the development dependent on any revenue from private residential real estate development on the Goshen land presently owned by the Muellers?
 - If yes, how many units of what type would constitute a complete build out? Where on the ground would this residential development be located? Over what period of time would this residential development be built before it is completed?
 - If not, is the Resort prepared to be more firm than it was at the hearing about excluding private residential development from the plans for the west bowl project?

As an organization with great concerns over the short and long term stewardship of public lands, we strongly recommend that you and the Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee ask and answer these questions before coming to any conclusions about whether the west bowl proposal is something worthy of the State's pursuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Abbott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Will Abbott
Vice President for Policy & Reservation Stewardship

cc: Nancy Marashio, SPNHF Representative to Mount Sunapee Advisory Committee