

To: "jamey.ayling@co.kittitas.wa.us" <jamey.ayling@co.kittitas.wa.us>

Dear Mr. Ayling,

April 26, 2024

I have had property in the Gold Creek drainage area at Hyak /Snoqualmie Pass WA since 1983. Spending time outdoors there has been a treasured experience.

After the opening of Interstate 90 (I90) I have observed a dramatic decline in the Gold Creek Valley travels of populations of elk, deer and other animals. Recent, well organized and expensive efforts resulted in creation of a safe passage across the I 90 corridor at the narrowing of Gold Creek Valley at I 90. Public data demonstrates a steady increase in wildlife crossings. The new pathway will help to restore the decimation that I 90 caused to cross-breeding travels of elk, deer and other wildlife At Gold Creek.

Mardee Lake is at the epicenter of the narrow access to the new, safe path across I 90. In my opinion, rezoning of Mardee Lake to enable development would severely undermine recent restorative efforts to re-establish a safe crossing path the I 90 corridor at Gold Creek.

A decision to allow rezoning at Mardee Lake would be irresponsible without careful consideration of an Environmental Impact Statement. EIS has not been completed.

I object to the Kittitas County's preliminary Mitigated Determination of Non-significance. The Growth Management Hearings Board's 2023 decision found that "the County had to analyze the probable impacts of its comprehensive plan amendment." Order, page 27. That has not occurred. In the new rezone proposal, impacts to wetlands and critical areas are not adequately addressed in light of the probability of conflict between new development and critical areas. There is "no dispute of the existence of critical areas on the Mardee Lake property and its environmental significance." Order, page 27.

Under the review board's decision, probable environmental impacts should not be (and cannot be here) deferred to project level approval.

A determination of nonsignificance based on the record before the county would substantially interfere with fulfillment of GMA Planning Goals 8, 9, 10, and 11. Kittitas County should require a critical areas report for Mardee Lake, and designate the rezone proposal as environmentally significant, possibly requiring an EIS.

Under the review board's decision, probable environmental impacts should not be (and cannot be here) deferred to project level approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Rex Gentry 