

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on National Parks & Public Lands

Witness Statement

May 25, 2000

Douglas Edgerton
Councilman, Town of West Yellowstone

Honorable James V. Hansen, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
And Public Lands

Dear Sir,

First of all I would like to say it is unfortunate that I was not allowed to address the Subcommittee personally. The representatives from our community that were called only present one side and lead me to believe you predispose an outcome.

The community of West Yellowstone is **NOT** united behind the snowmobile operators on the issue of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park. This group is doing as much as possible to protect their own interests and do not represent the best interests of the whole community.

The phase down of snowmobiles and the change to snowcoaches provides the greatest opportunity for a sustainable and growing economy in West Yellowstone. The snowmobile operators' insistence that snowmobiles are the key to West Yellowstone's winter economy is fundamentally wrong. It is not and never has been snowmobiles. The key to West Yellowstone's economy is and always has been Yellowstone National Park.

Snowcoaches will carry more visitors with less impact. Snowcoaches present opportunity for growth in visitation and a growing and expanding local economy. Snowmobiles offer only limits, controversy, and the further consolidation of the economy in the hands of a few.

If access **really** is an issue, snowmobiles are owned by less than 1% of Americans and less than 3% of Montanans. Snowcoaches will be more affordable and will carry more visitors, thus giving **greater** access to all Americans not just one special interest group.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Douglas Edgerton
Councilman, Town of West Yellowstone

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