



In his latest (April 18) opinion piece, “*Ski Execs Vote for Snowmaking over Climate Protection*,” Porter Fox criticizes the ski industry for investing in snowmaking and protecting water resources for the future – which happen to be two critical components of climate adaptation. To be clear, ski areas don’t choose snowmaking over climate protection, we choose *both* – and have to. The ski industry has prudently chosen a multi-faceted approach to addressing climate change, including education, mitigation, advocacy and adaptation. There is no either-or proposition here - we have to do all four to ensure our resiliency for the future.

Is Mr. Fox really suggesting that ski areas not make snow? Surely *Powder* readers wouldn’t support that notion. Snowmaking is essential to ski area operations. Without water, snowmaking wouldn’t exist. Protecting water supplies for the future is a smart thing to do. Ski areas support the proposed Water Rights Protection Act because it is *legislation* that would place *statutory* restrictions against federal government action to unlawfully take water rights. There is a big difference between Forest Service policy and legislation. Policy can, and does, change with shifting political winds (witness the four different USFS policies applied to ski area water rights between 2010 and 2015). Legislation is an insurance policy against executive branch water policies changing with each administration. And by the way, the federal court that voided the Forest Service’s 2012 water clause did so on procedural grounds, not substantive grounds—yet another reason to shore up water rights protection via federal legislation!

We share your frustration that broad scale solutions have not yet been applied to climate change. But Mr. Fox shouldn’t let that frustration lead him down the path of absurdly calling for an end to snowmaking or criticizing resorts for being strategic in protecting their water supplies. The thousand plus companies who signed the Low Carbon USA message to President Trump (including many ski areas) are still carrying on in their businesses as they advocate for broad scale action on climate. Would Mr. Fox suggest that New Belgium stop brewing beer or The North Face stop making jackets because manufacturing has carbon emissions associated with it? I doubt it.

Even if the United States stays committed to the Paris Climate Agreement (which is by no means a certainty) and all of the participating countries meet their Paris Agreement pledges, the planet is still forecast to warm. Where does this leave us? As an industry, we must increase our focus on climate adaptation. Last fall, Mr. Fox told me in a phone conversation that I should be embarrassed to even mention the words “climate adaptation,” as in his view, it is synonymous with avoidance. I am not embarrassed about climate adaptation for ski areas. Then-Secretary John Kerry wasn’t embarrassed about offering \$800M annually in climate adaptation funding as part of the Paris Agreement. The Bi-Partisan Climate Solutions Caucus isn’t embarrassed about focusing on adaptation, nor are coastal communities who are not only planning for climate adaptation, but getting funding from the federal government to implement it. The ski industry can and must plan for the future *and* do advocacy (and education and mitigation) at the same time.

Snowmaking, protecting water resources, and climate adaptation are part of our future. Thanks for providing the opportunity to emphasize the importance of climate adaptation for the ski industry going forward.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Link

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