

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE OF UTAH

REPRESENTATIVE  
GAY LYNN BENNION

DISTRICT 46  
SALT LAKE COUNTY



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December 4, 2021

Town of Alta Residents, Council Members, and Mayor Sondak,

As your state representative, I take this opportunity to honor Mayor Harris Sondak and thank him for the exceptional service he has given the Town of Alta and Utah during the last four years.

As I have joined Alta Town Council meetings, I have been impressed with his extreme care of time management. He values this precious commodity, listens carefully, and ensures that meetings flow in an effective, fair manner.

Mayor Sondak makes communication with others a top priority. Whenever I have had a question, he is quick to respond with appropriate details.

Mayor Sondak envisioned a new Alta Community Center and has worked with Ennead to deliver a highly aesthetic and functional plan, which will eventually grace Alta and those who visit in countless ways while placing minimal impact upon nature.

As I have joined Central Wasatch Commission meetings, I have been impressed with Mayor Sondak's focused involvement and pertinent questions. He has been a dependable, educated part of important conversations in that group as well as on the Board of Directors for the Unified Fire Authority.

I share this comment from one of Mayor Sondak's students in the University of Utah's Business Department, where he serves as Chair. "If you want a professor that is passionate and will change the way you think, Professor Sondak is your guy." All of us fortunate to be within the circumference of Mayor Sondak's reach become his students as we sense his expectation of giving and becoming our finest selves.

Thank you, Mayor Sondak, for sharing your most valuable commodities, your time and mental focus, so generously with the Town of Alta and with Utah through your leadership and sacrifice during these last four years.

With highest regard,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gay Lynn Bennion".

Gay Lynn Bennion

**From:** [Bryce Ipson](#)  
**To:** [Jen Clancy](#); [info@friendsofalta.org](mailto:info@friendsofalta.org)  
**Subject:** Permitted parking  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 7, 2021 11:33:56 PM

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Hello,

My name is Bryce and I'm an avid Backcountry skier, who also has a pass for Alta and Snowbird.

I am aware of the issue of parking that causes headaches for the staff and skiers at Alta. This plan is just passing on the issue to the backcountry community.

The areas that will be affected by this plan are public lands(excluding the 144 acres north of LCC) and implementing this plan will limit the public's access. Many spots in Grizzly, Flagstaff, Wildcat and Albion will be reserved for resort skiers who are not using the backcountry areas.

Those backcountry skiers who do reserve parking for these areas will be paying a fee that goes to Alta Ski resort, whose services they don't use(Lifts, staff, etc.)

This system will make it inconvenient or even obsolete to dawn patrol. Often times on busy weekends, I'm up and touring before the resort is open and down before most people are taking their skis out of their car. Paid parking will hinder the ability of those who must ski early, and those who come in the afternoon to use only one spot. There will not an efficient way to rotate parking spots.

These backcountry areas are also the most common place for beginners to learn, in fact this is the primary location where I learned to ski in the backcountry. KBYG and avy courses take place in LCC. A parking fee will add an additional step and expense for safety classes to take when they have a small number of open spots throughout the year. Mine and my family's fear is that this will push people into higher avalanche danger areas, where they are more likely to get into accidents.

It's also not feasible to make reservation for Backcountry skiers a week in advance. With so many variables it's unsafe to force people to commit to a day. A lot can change in 48 hours.

There has been an increase in the SLC population and a rise in Backcountry equipment purchases. If we don't plan for Backcountry users, we will suffer the consequences. It'll cost thousands in rescue services, not to mention it could cost lives. Last year we lost 7 people(6 in the SLC area) to avalanches, 10 people buried and 46 people caught. I'm afraid that this plan is dismissing the backcountry lovers in our community and their safety. Dismissing us will result in further loss of life and cost to the Utah Community.

I wish to see a solution proposed that either encourage carpooling such as free parking to those with multiple people in the car or open backcountry-only parking. If it must come to fees, have them benefits the USDA or Utah Avalanche Center. This truly feels like the care of the natural resources are being put second to the profits of the investors.

I would also like to make a comment during the zoom meeting during the public comment time.

Best Regards,

Bryce Ipson

**From:** Tyler Rudd  
**To:** [Jen Clancy](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Paid parking permit  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 8, 2021 11:43:20 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Ohh yes!

Good Morning,

It has been brought to my attention that Alta Ski Lifts is reviewing and planning to decide on their plan for permitted parking soon. As a backcountry skier and frequenter of LCC I wanted to reach out and voice my opinion on the matter.

I am worried about having to pay to access public lands in the upper LCC. Upper LCC is home to some of the best, most accessible backcountry terrain in Utah. Not only that, but it also provides access to grizzly gulch, what is known as the premiere spot for beginner backcountry skiers and a safe haven on high avalanche danger days. Charging \$25 to access these lands will result in pushing more people into more dangerous terrain and already crowded "safe zones". Grizzly is home to many Avy 1, KBYG and rescue courses; it's a playground for learning how to stay safe in the backcountry. Another place I frequent on high avalanche danger days is the Emma ridge line, which would also be affected by paid, permitted parking. This year's snowpack is setting up to be dangerous like last years, and I hate to think that hundreds more backcountry skiers will be pushed into other, less safe zones as a result.

This brings me to my next point. Backcountry skiing is growing exponentially, especially in the Wasatch, and this needs to be addressed. There was a uptick in backcountry ski equipment purchases from 2019-2020, at a rate of 76% and this upward trend is not slowing down. Many people moved here from all over the US for the backcountry skiing. I would hate to have access to upper LCC restricted. Also, it is not feasible to try and plan a backcountry tour a week in advance (like one would need to for reservations). There is too many variables to predict that far out to let you determine what a user is going to ski a week out; snowfall, wind, avalanche danger, etc.

Another thing to think about, SLC is home to a massive (and growing) population. A large majority of that population works your typical 9-5 jobs, meaning that if we want to ski during winter, it must be before work. I understand parking won't be allowed before 8am, which is the time most dawn patrollers are getting ready to ski down, back to their car and go into work. Sure, there's other options like BCC and lower LCC, but those zones already have parking lots filled up by 5-6am most days. You can only shove so many people in one zone before it becomes dangerous and ruins the experience for everyone....something ASL certainly understands. Restricting parking before 8am everyday is a massive burden on backcountry skiers.

Beyond these issues, I am concerned about this money being funneled into ASL's pockets. If I am paying for parking, it should be contributed to something worthwhile, like upkeep on the road, maintaining trails or funding towards more public transportation, not further lining investors pockets. It should go back to the forest service honestly because that is what we are using is public

lands. It SHOULD NOT be another revenue source for ASL. The money could fund more busses, or smaller shuttles for the dawn patrollers in LCC (would really love to see this happen regardless). If it is not about the money, like ASL claims, a simple, free permitted parking system would achieve the same result.

I feel backcountry users and canyon enthusiasts are getting the short end of the stick and frankly ASL is giving us the middle finger with this permitted parking plan. I understand the mission of your company is to “protect natural resources for generations to come,” and I believe that you guys will do the right thing, step up and act, that falls in harmony with your mission. I look forward to your response.

Thanks

Thanks again.  
Tyler

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To whom it may concern:

My name is Anna Robling. This will be my third winter season as an Alta season pass holder. I became a legal resident of Alta in August 2020. I vote here. I live here. I work here.

I am writing to Alta Ski Lifts not only with concern for our small, close-knit Alta community but also with concern for the integrity and respect of Public Lands across the country.

Alta Ski Lifts has said itself, "Alta is more than a ski area. We are a whole community of groups and organizations that make Alta special." The abuse of the SUP provided by the USFS suggests otherwise. The way that ASL has negotiated (see: bullied) local government officials, small business owners, and residents based on contract technicalities is despicable. ASL frequently wields the charm and mystique of the Alta Community in marketing copy on its website. It seems that this adoration is merely empty praise of a social ecosystem the company has no real stake in preserving and nourishing, and would, quite frankly, rather do away with.

In your words, "Because we can't do this alone. Alta has worked hand-in-hand with some incredible local partners to preserve the Alta community we know and love."

Barricading access to public lands is not a step towards preserving the Alta community you "know and love". Preventing town of Alta residents from having a place to park their cars is a step in the opposite direction; it is backing community members, like myself, who make a small hourly wage and have little to no obvious benefit to the Ski Area's balance sheet, into a cumbersome corner. It is an abuse of power. Unfortunately, that comes as no surprise. It suggests that community members are not an asset but a liability to ASL's bottom line.

Additional parking on an ad hoc basis is not practical or reasonable. Imagine if someone put ad hoc restrictions on your personal driveway, "oh yeah you have one, but it is subject to change on a whim at an hour or any moment if someone can pay to park in that spot!" They can't do that, of course, because you own your driveway. Many community members are not landowners. We rely on the use of Public Land that ASL is grossly manipulating. Random time restrictions would create a significant impingement on the ability of Little Cottonwood Canyon residents to come and go freely from their homes. There is a more compassionate way to solve the Little Cottonwood Canyon transportation conundrum.

54 parking spaces is not enough to accommodate the employees of even one lodge. Let alone guests. If Alta Ski Lifts really respects and cherishes this community, Alta Ski Lifts should consider a more neighborly agreement with the Town of Alta.

Sincerely,  
Anna Robling