

Chapter 23: Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

Implementing an action alternative would involve a commitment of a range of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. Land used for constructing the Selected Alternative would be considered an irreversible commitment of these resources during the time that the land is used for the alternative. (See Chapter 3, Land Use, for a description of the land that would be converted to project use by each action alternative and Chapter 13, Ecosystem Resources, for a description of the effects of the action alternatives on natural resources.) However, if a greater need for use of the land arises, or if the roadway, gondola, or cog rail is no longer needed, the land could be converted to a natural state or another use. At present, there is no reason to believe that such conversion would ever be necessary or desirable.

A considerable amount of fossil fuels, labor, and roadway, gondola, and rail construction materials such as concrete, pavement, aggregate, steel, and bituminous material would be expended. Additionally, large amounts of labor and natural resources would be necessary for fabricating and preparing the construction materials. These materials are generally irretrievable, but they are not in short supply, and their use would not have an adverse effect on the continued availability of these resources.

Constructing the Selected Alternative would also require a substantial expenditure of irretrievable funds. The commitment of these resources is based on the premise that residents in the area, the state, and the region would benefit from the improved quality of the transportation system. These benefits would consist of improved accessibility and safety, and savings in travel time, all of which are anticipated to outweigh the commitment of these financial resources.

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