

To: Bob Hall, Jack Gierhard, USBA Board members, Integration review committee
From: Jay Bowerman, Biathlon '68 and '72
Regarding: Proposed integration/merger between USBA and USSS

Date: August 18, 2026

Dear Biathlon Board of Directors and others.

Let me begin by stating that I believe all of us on both sides of the merger issue want the same thing--to see biathlon grow and succeed in the US. But as a past Olympic biathlete ('68, '72) and USBA life member, I want to register my reservations regarding the proposed merger/integration between USBA and USSS. I offer the following observations.

Following my retirement from active competition, I spent 50-plus years involved in the world of non-profit organizations. I founded and successfully directed a non-profit organization through its first 30 years. I also served on the boards of directors of multiple non-profit organizations and philanthropic foundations. I witnessed what can happen when board members with backgrounds in private enterprise insist that "we need to run this organization like a business." Although non-profits must be fiscally responsible, there is ample evidence that running a non-profit like a business is a recipe for disaster or, as one website put it, "**...if you try to run your nonprofit like a business, you will go broke. Or go to jail. Or both**" (source: <https://dennisfischman.com/not-run-nonprofit-like-business/>).

After retiring, I watched with dismay and sorrow as the organization I spent my professional career building and sustaining, gradually lose its way and its base of support as the board of directors tried to run it like a business instead of staying focused on its mission, its historic roots, and listening to its core constituents. The ultimate success of any major initiative within a non-profit depends upon buy-in by those who pour heart and soul into the success of the organization. In the case of US biathlon, that means getting buy-in from the athletes, the coaches, the clubs and the volunteers. Without their support, failure is inevitable. Right now, you do not have that buy-in.

If USBA leadership wants to successfully combine our organization with USSS, it is imperative that all of the major constituents, including current and past athletes, clubs, and coaches are fully informed, have a seat at the table in considerations, and receive and accept detailed answers to critical questions and ultimately support the decision. That is one of the critical differences between non-profit organizations and for-profit companies. Proceeding without buy-in breeds distrust and guarantees failure.

This decision is about much more than money. Please don't go down this road without first achieving buy-in from those of us who really care. In the words of the great symphony conductor James DePriest, who elevated the Oregon Symphony to national prominence:

Bottomliners beware, there is another set of books.

Sincerely,

Jay Bowerman