

North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance

PO Box 289, Tahoe Vista, CA 96148

Office: 530-546-8125

www.ntcaa.org

Jerry Wotel, Newsletter Editor

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Placer County to Include Cabin Creek as Biomass Plant Alternative

At the Placer County Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting April 11 the staff reported the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a proposed 2MW Biomass Power Plant will analyze Cabin Creek (Eastern Regional Landfill) as an alternative site, but will continue to consider Kings Beach as their preferred site.

After the staff report, the BOS heard seven citizens (the NTCAA and Friends of Lake Tahoe represented) present technical arguments and appeals to common sense against locating the plant in Kings Beach. There were no public comments in favor of a Kings Beach location.

Placer County's Biomass Program Director still justified locating an incinerator/generator in the Lake Tahoe Basin based on two false premises. First, that incineration in Kings Beach will reduce open burning and increase fuels reduction activity rather than the level of public subsidy determining the extent of thinning and conversion to fuel grade biomass. Second, that all the forest material generated in the Lake Tahoe Basin (LTB) will be taken directly to Kings Beach to be burned, rather than taken first to Cabin Creek for screening, drying, and storing. Even if slash piles could be treated in the field (chipped or ground, screened, and dried) to meet the fuel specification during the summer, for at least seven months of winter the material would have to be transported from Cabin Creek. This entails building up a supply at Cabin Creek of 20,000 green tons prior to winter.

Assuming federal and state funds continue to be available to convert the forest material into biomass fuel then Cabin Creek will continue to have the material on site much like a lumber mill produces waste that is economically burned at the site to produce heat for drying lumber and electricity.

Biomass EIR May Be Fatally Flawed

Placer County anticipates the EIR will be released in late spring or early summer, but the document may be "dead on arrival" if air emissions from a proposed plant are compared to a baseline of emissions from open burning. It is well understood, fully agreed to, and so obvious that controlled combustion releases less air pollution than openly burning forest material.



easybeinggreen

Open burning occurs in different locations throughout the LTB only when certain conditions exist. The Forest Service and local Fire Districts are acutely aware of the public health risks from open burning, and are diligent in pursuing funds to minimize the practice. But the practice of open pile burning and prescribed burns is one of several tools used. The emissions cannot justifiably be considered a baseline to compare with an incinerator that runs 24/7 in one location. Kings Beach has not had any open burning for more than three years. How can this be a baseline to adequately inform the general public of the pollutants being introduced by a new incinerator? It can't. It is a cleverly designed diversion to show huge reductions in pollution, as if open burning occurred in one location, all day and night, every day of the year.

If the EIR uses open burning as a baseline for criteria pollutants, then the EIR will fail to provide adequate information for the public to assess the air quality impacts of a Biomass Plant in the LTB.

Sierra Business Council Makes Shocking and False Claims Supporting Boulder Bay Development

In the April 15, 2011 issue of the Sierra Sun, Steve Frisch as President and CEO of Truckee based Sierra Business Council (SBC) wrote an article "Voicing Support for Boulder Bay." He writes, "The Boulder Bay project eliminates antiquated inefficient units and replaces them with units using one quarter the energy; reduces vehicle miles traveled by 10%..."

NTCAA has been following these claims of energy and traffic reductions made by overly zealous non-technical project advocates for years. The facts remain that Boulder Bay proposes to replace the existing 120 units at the Biltmore and Crystal Bay Motel with 360 units plus new commercial floor area. The claim that 360 units plus new commercial will use less energy (75% less) and reduce vehicle miles (function of vehicle trips or traffic) compared to the existing 120 units is not only an affront to science and fact, but it misleads the general public into supporting a false representation of reality.



If one replaces a 100 watt light bulb with four 50 watt bulbs you do not use less energy. The increase in overall energy consumption, due to the scale at Boulder Bay, will increase electricity use

which comes mostly from burning coal. Natural gas (another fossil fuel) demand will also increase. Water consumption will also increase substantially. And traffic will increase significantly to support the 300% increase in units.

The scale of Boulder Bay is not sustainable. SBC's desire for a smaller carbon footprint would only be met with a substantially reduced scale of project. The only source of this erroneous claim by SBC comes from the Arup Study, a consultant hired by Boulder Bay. Among the numerous flaws in the study the most obvious is the baseline used to compare energy, water use, as well as carbon footprint. The baseline was not the existing consumption from the roughly 120 units, but was scaled up to 304 units. The consultant imagined almost 200 more units than what exists to-

day to estimate the baseline consumption today. Their conclusion was a 38% reduction in electricity and gas consumption. Even that number is substantially more than 75% or “one quarter of the energy,” as claimed by the SBC.

Tourist Accommodation Unit (TAU) as a Public Entitlement Heating Up

The future for Lake Tahoe should include well-planned development through managed growth that maintains a healthy, vital community taking into consideration our environmental, social, and scenic, recreation, and community values. This includes a well thought out vision for our local communities. The true impacts of how TAU’s are currently being used or applied have not been thoroughly analyzed in NTCAA’s opinion. In particular, the morphing of TAU’s from single motel rooms to four bedroom homes as is becoming increasing more common in fractional timeshare developments is of particular concern:

- Fractional type development which consists of morphing of single TAU’s to homes of indeterminate size and number of bedrooms as is becoming increasingly more popular due to the high costs of real estate and realization of profit margins.
- The impacts associated with these fractional projects are multi-fold and include both social as well as environmental concerns. Not all TAU uses are created equal nor do they have the same impacts. Redevelopment of an existing developed and blighted site might present far less impact than the impact of construction on vacant land, or land that is sparsely occupied.

A one bedroom or studio motel room without a kitchen is looked at as the same as a four bedroom residential timeshare with kitchen in terms of the entitlement itself. Fractional development can dramatically accelerate the increase in occupancy and building mass, which results in increases in traffic and parking needs; air and water quality issues, TMDL concerns due to soil disturbance and potential for increased runoff; carbon footprint changes, vegetation and wildlife habitat loss; need for additional recreation due to more people; demand on infrastructure – roads, water, sewer and increased demand for fire suppression; potential impacts to scenic roadway and shoreline units; and massing issues relating to scale & character of neighborhoods.



The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is evaluating the TAU application in their Regional Plan Update. They comment: *All projects are evaluated on the whole scope of the project, not only on the number of units being used. We recognize that residential-design timeshares and motel rooms come with different potential impacts and we continue to review TAU projects based on the big picture.* NTCAA has been addressing this issue since August 2008, and our comments can be seen on our website at ntcaa.org. We have maintained that a TAU transfer of one-bedroom per one-bedroom be used to equate the environmental and community impact.

Placer County Redevelopment Agency Office Opens In Kings Beach

Currently you can visit or make an appointment to see Redevelopment Agency staff every Tuesday and Thursday, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Located at 7717 North Lake Boulevard, the former AAA building (just west of Safeway) on Highway 28. The telephone number for this office is (530) 546-1953. Staff can also be reached at (530) 745-3150.

This spring the Agency will take occupancy of the former Kentucky Fried Chicken building located at 8697 North Lake Boulevard in Kings Beach. Renovations are currently underway.

Upcoming Events/Key Dates

Agendas for TRPA Governing Board and APC, and also Placer County BOS are not available until a few days before the meeting. Therefore, it is difficult to provide a meaningful emphasis to the meetings. Other meetings/events not shown here, or changes, will be announced by email.

May 4, Wednesday	NLTRA Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
May 10, Tuesday	NTPUD Board Meeting	9 am, NTEC, Kings Beach
May 11, Wednesday	TRPA APC Meeting	9:30 am, TRPA Stateline Office
May 12, Thursday	NTRAC Meeting	6 pm, NTEC, Kings Beach
May 18, Wednesday	NTPFD Board Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
May 20, Friday	TCPUD Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
May 25, Wednesday	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, To Be Announced

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
NLTRA – North Lake Tahoe Resort Association
TCPUD – Tahoe City Public Utility District
NTEC – North Tahoe Event Center
BOS – Placer County Board of Supervisors

APC – Advisory Planning Commission
NTPUD – North Tahoe Public Utility District
NTPFD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District
NTRAC – North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council

“That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them”.....George Mason, Virginia Bill of Rights, 1776

Contributors to this newsletter: Dave McClure, and Jerry Wotel

The North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance (NTCAA) seeks to provide an ongoing voice for ordinary citizens. Planning the future of our communities and providing for communication and education on key issues affecting our communities is of prime importance. We serve the North Lake Tahoe area from Kings Beach to Tahoma. NTCAA is a tax-exempt California Public Benefit Nonprofit Corporation formed in May 2007, staffed by community volunteers. Membership is limited to those who subscribe to the NTCAA Goals and Objectives and are willing to participate in the organization's activities.