

## TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

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# NEWS RELEASE

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For Release Immediately

February 24, 2005

### **TRPA CHANGES PERMIT FILING FEES-- NEW FEE STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE**

**(Stateline, NV) – February 24, 2005** – The Governing Board of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency approved a change to the Agency's filing fee schedule at their monthly Board meeting on Wednesday that is aimed to cut project review in half over time. The new fees will sunset on June 30, 2005 unless the Agency demonstrates improvements in the permit review process, including new accountability measures, the Governing Board decided.

"A top concern of the community is the length of time the TRPA takes to review permits," said Julie Regan, Communications Director. "While we understand that any fee increase is a concern to the public, we've been told that if we deliver results and perform better, people are willing to pay more to speed up the process."

The new filing fee schedule is designed to cut project review time in half over the next 12 months. Not all fees are increasing, however, applications for additions to single family homes and new home construction are included in the fee changes.

"An independent review of TRPA pointed to a major staff shortage for reviewing permit applications," Regan said. "The bottom line is that more applications are coming into the Agency and fewer employees are available to process the applications. We've not kept pace with increases in workload and something has to change in order to serve the public effectively. We have a highly qualified staff and they need the tools to do their jobs properly."

A major goal of the new fee schedule is to have construction in the Tahoe Basin pay its fair share, according to Agency officials. Under the old fees, development applications have been subsidized by all taxpayers.

The Governing Board has asked the staff at TRPA to put accountability measures in place over the next four months to show progress at processing permits more efficiently. The Agency wants to improve service to the public while fulfilling its mission to preserve Lake Tahoe, officials said.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency cooperatively leads the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region now and in the future.

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