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NEWS RELEASE

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COURT FINDS MAJORITY OF ISSUES IN HOMEWOOD CASE HAVE NO MERIT CASE REMANDED BACK TO TRPA ON ONE ISSUE

Stateline, NV – On the question of whether the Homewood Mountain Ski Area Resort, a ski area on Lake Tahoe’s West Shore, can be revitalized, the U.S. District Court validated all of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency’s environmental findings in the decision on the Sierra Club’s lawsuit challenging the project. The court remanded the case back to TRPA on one very limited issue concerning the adequacy of the economic analysis related to one of the alternatives studied, TRPA officials said.

In his ruling, United States District Judge William B. Shubb ruled in favor of TRPA on the overwhelming majority of the plaintiffs’ challenges, but found the outside analysis used to determine the economic feasibility of alternatives needed more detail and granted the plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment on that limited basis.

The judge found that there was no merit to the Sierra Club’s claims that TRPA’s environmental analysis of the Homewood Ski Area Master Plan was inadequate. Overall, he found that the environmental analysis had sufficiently studied a reasonable range of alternatives that reduced environmental impacts. He also rejected the plaintiffs’ claims that additional alternatives should have been studied, holding the plaintiffs’ had not shown the alternatives would lessen the significant environmental impacts identified.

Judge Shubb also upheld the adequacy of major TRPA programs including the air quality mitigation fee program and the Regional Plan’s effectiveness to achieve and maintain air quality and noise thresholds. TRPA’s determination that Homewood’s payment of fees under the existing air quality mitigation program was found to be adequate to mitigate the project’s air quality impacts.

In addition, the court found that it was within TRPA’s discretion to amend its regulations to provide environmental restoration incentives and that there was substantial evidence to support TRPA’s claims that the amendments were made to further achieve and attain environmental thresholds.

"After a thorough review, the court affirmed all of the environmental approaches relied upon to improve ecosystem conditions in the Tahoe Basin," said TRPA Executive Director, Joanne S. Marchetta. "The court further affirmed using public-private partnerships to maximize threshold gain through environmental redevelopment."

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board voted to approve Phase 1 of the Homewood Mountain Resort Ski Area Master Plan at the December 2011 meeting. During the final hearing, Governing Board members

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heard nearly 70 public comments which were more than two-to-one in support of approving the Homewood Mountain Resort project. It is the only mixed-use resort in the U.S. designed to incorporate Gold level LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification for neighborhood development design standards.

The master plan calls for extensive environmental improvements such as land and stream environment zone (SEZ) restoration, use of renewable energy, and a wide-variety of alternative transportation programs to help lessen the use of automobiles by resort guests. The project includes construction of a slope-side 5-star hotel with up to 75 rooms, a wide variety of base area residences including condominiums, townhomes, and chalets, 13 workforce housing apartments, and a pedestrian-oriented retail village.

The environmental improvements of the Homewood Master Ski Area Plan include:

- Keeping an estimated 80,000 pounds of harmful sediment from entering Lake Tahoe each year through an aggressive erosion control program on the entire watershed of the Homewood Ski Area.
- Reducing the amount of land coverage on the 1,200 acre property by 13 percent resulting in the restoration of 500,000 square feet of degraded land on the mountain.
- Replacing inefficient old buildings with ones that meet the highest standards of energy and water efficiency.
- Contributing to stormwater erosion control, wetlands restoration, bike trails, and other high priority projects in the Environmental Improvement Program.
- Reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire by completing fuels management and ecosystem restoration projects on the mountain.
- Implementing a robust transportation program to reduce traffic congestion by making it convenient for guests, employees and locals not to use their cars

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. For additional information, call Kristi Boosman at (775) 589-5230 or send an email to kboosman@trpa.org.