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NEWS RELEASE

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COURT REJECTS PLAINTIFFS' REQUEST FOR SHOREZONE JUDGE

Stateline, NV – The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency received a positive ruling in the opening stages of the lawsuit challenging the Homewood Mountain Ski Area Master Plan that was filed by the Sierra Club and the Friends of the West Shore.

On January 30, 2012, Eastern District Federal Judge Lawrence Karlton rejected the plaintiffs' request that he preside over the Homewood lawsuit rather than the randomly assigned judge, William Shubb. The plaintiffs argued that Homewood was sufficiently related to a 2010 shorezone case Judge Karlton had previously ruled on to warrant moving the Homewood matter to his court. The court disagreed.

When completed, the Homewood Mountain Ski Area project will revitalize a 50-year old ski resort located on over 1,200 acres on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. It was designed to deliver extensive environmental improvements such as land and stream environment zone restoration, forest fuels reduction, use of renewable energy, and a wide-variety of alternative transportation options to help reduce automobile use in the area.

Some members of the TRPA's Governing Board spoke out about the lawsuit filed to stop the Homewood project they unanimously approved in December.

"The Governing Board deliberated carefully on this project and approved it due to overwhelming environmental, community, and economic benefits, as well as strong public support," stated Larry Sevison, Placer County's Appointee to the TRPA Governing Board. Similar sentiments were expressed by other Governing Board members.

"The Homewood Mountain Resort project epitomizes the type of intelligent, environmentally responsible development that will help us achieve threshold gains while infusing life back into the local and regional economies," said Shelly Aldean, Vice Chair of TRPA's Governing Board.

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Litigants of the project claim that the 325-unit resort is too large; however, the property owners, JMA Ventures, already reduced the size of the project several times based on community input. Three TRPA Governing Board members also supported a smaller project. However, an independent economic analysis produced by Bay Area Economics revealed that more unit reductions would prevent the resort from being economically viable. Homewood Mountain Resort has steadfastly maintained that a revitalized resort needs a certain bed-base in order to make the resort economically sustainable and that they can't afford to build a resort that loses money.

Once completed, the Homewood Resort would be considerably smaller than most destination resorts in and around the Tahoe Basin with the tallest structure measuring only 47 feet (less than 4 stories) from the base of the building to the top and well below the tree line. The Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort at Incline, by comparison is over 11 stories high, the Resort at Squaw Creek is over 8, the Ritz Carlton over 5, and the Village at Northstar Resort is over 4 stories high.

The litigants also claim that the Homewood project would create negative impacts on traffic, air, and water quality.

But Governing Board member, Robin Reedy, disagrees. "We approved the Homewood project based on its considerable environmental and community benefits," she said. It would eliminate 80,000 pounds of sediment from entering our Lake each year, utilize Gold-level LEED construction techniques, create alternative transportation options to reduce car travel, and manage parking for the resort as well as other visitors that park along the highway creating traffic congestion."

"The question before this Governing Board," explained Joanne S. Marchetta, TRPA's Executive Director, in her introductory remarks at December's Governing Board meeting, "is whether or not Homewood will continue to be part of the West Shore community for the next 50 years."

According to Homewood, the resort is currently losing money and cannot effectively compete with modern ski resorts in the Basin without updating facilities. They maintain that in addition to the environmental benefits, the Homewood revitalization project is expected to generate approximately \$7 million in annual tax revenues, 500 temporary construction jobs, 180 new full-time positions, and annual visitor spending in the local community of \$16-\$20 million. Testimony at five public meetings that took place during Homewood's lengthy approval process included public input that was typically four to one in support of the project.

"The future resiliency of the Tahoe Basin is reliant on the balance of the economic, environmental, social, and evolutionary components of sustainability," said Norma Santiago, Chair of the TRPA Governing Board. "Significant losses in any of these components hurt everyone. It is important that we honor and recognize our community by bringing forth projects that best support this balance."

Casey Beyer, the Governor of California appointee to the Governing Board added, "TRPA is charged with protecting Lake Tahoe, enforcing environmental standards, and also supporting the economic vitality of our Basin as dictated by the compact. I believe this board met that duty," he 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. For additional information, call Kristi Boosman at (775) 589-5230 or send an email to kboosman@trpa.org.