Letter: Placer County needs to slow down

Publisher's note: ***This letter was sent to Placer County and is reprinted with permission.***

To Placer County:

The citizens of North Lake Tahoe, along with environmental groups in Tahoe and surrounding region and local government agencies, are asking for your support for a fair public process.

We have been besieged with thousands of pages of environmental documentation and have responded in kind. We have asked that Placer slow down the approval process to no avail and give each project its due respect. Final and draft environmental reports on three major projects that will affect the next 20 years in the Tahoe region have been released within a span of 70 days.

The Placer County public process for responding to environmental documents is being abused by releasing several documents of several thousands of pages (EIR document, reference materials, studies, etc. add up to thousands of pages) each for local government agencies, environmental groups, the public-at-large, etc., to respond with comprehensive comments to inform the local elected officials.

I do not require a lot of sleep and can pass up a few meals, but it's been hard to get a breath of fresh air trying to read all the documents. There are only 24 hours in a day.

Yes, the county is adhering to minimum requirements for response time but not taking into consideration the volume of information we are required to consume to provide comments.

What’s the hurry? To get these projects approved (the three majors projects listed below) have been in the queue with one environmental consultant. The consultant completes their efforts and we get slammed.

The process is not allowing for a sufficient amount of time between each project. They are being overlapped with several meetings each month that we must attend or send in written comments to build an accurate record.

Furthermore, there are many other smaller, but just as important, projects in the pipeline for public comment and meeting attendance (Placer and Nevada County):

1). The Railyard Mixed-Use Development Master Plan in Truckee.
2). The Crown Motel (Laulima) redevelopment of 4.5 acres on lake and mountain sides of Highway 28 includes 117 lodging rooms, 34 residential units, and 5,500 square feet of commercial space in Kings Beach.
3). The Alpine-Squaw Gondola project: a new 8-person gondola (a design capacity of approximately 1,400 persons per hour in both directions) connecting the Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley ski resorts.
4). And on-hold but will be released: The Brockway Campground – a 550-unit luxury camping experience with swimming pool, commercial, etc. atop a Tahoe ridgeline at Brockway Summit abutting the Martis Valley West parcel Specific Plan, just to name a few.

Info on the three major projects can be found below. It’s not too late to participate before the projects are approved, but beware it’s a time consuming process just to address one project, let alone all three.

Meetings we know of:
July 7: Placer Planning Commission, subject TBD (Squaw or Martis Valley West).
July 13: TRPA Advisory Planning Commission will hear Tahoe

Basin Area Plan.
July 26: Placer Board of Supervisors Martis Valley West, tentative.
July 27: TRPA Governing Board and Regional Plan Implementation Committee (two presentations same day) on the Tahoe Basin Area Plan.
July 28: Placer County Planning Commission, Tahoe Basin Area Plan.
Aug. 9: Placer County Planning Commission, Squaw, tentative.
Aug. 11: North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council, Tahoe Basin Area Plan
Stay Tuned: Squaw and Martis Valley West will have meetings actually scheduled.

Below are shortened URLs to the environmental reports and more information on the three major aforementioned projects:

- Tahoe Basin Area Plan (20+ year up date of community plans and a 120 unit hotel in Tahoe City) released June 15, 2016, Draft Environmental Impact Report: bit.ly/28NfL9T
- Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, released May 3, 2016: bit.ly/28R5QPl
- Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, released April 7, 2016: bit.ly/28LywvL

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