Lawsuit filed to stop Placer's Tahoe area plan

By Kathryn Reed

A lawsuit has been filed to stop the implementation of Placer County's Tahoe Basin Area Plan.

The approvals by the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 6 included the plan, environmental documents and green-lighted the 118-unit Tahoe City Lodge project.

The lawsuit filed Dec. 21 by the California Clean Energy Committee against the county names Kila Tahoe LLC, the developer of the hotel, as a party of interest. The group is supported by 45 North Shore residents in its quest to get the court to side with its beliefs.

CCEC contends the environmental analysis is not adequate, in particular CEQA – the California Environmental Quality Act.

Court documents state, "The county failed to describe and failed to focus on feasible mitigation for climate impacts of the area plan and in doing so failed to comply with the information disclosure provisions of CEQA. … Then the county simply concluded that the extent of the emission reduction was unknown and that the impact was therefore significant and could not be mitigated. That process does not meet the requirement of CEQA that mitigation measures be discussed."

The lawsuit brings up the fact the county said it would reduce vehicle miles traveled by building bike trails. However, CCEC points out that in Placer's capital improvement plan road improvements take priority and that the bike paths are underfunded. This fact, the plaintiffs contend, has the county saying one thing and doing another.

CCEC has been part of the process for months, having submitted comments on the draft and final environmental impact reports.

“If the respondent agencies are allowed to proceed with the project, irreparable harm will result to the environment and the public,” the lawsuit says.

Because of the holidays no representatives from either side could be reached.

The nonprofit California Clean Energy Committee is based in Davis. The group advocates on behalf of the public for energy conservation, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable transportation, smart growth and other conservation issues. CCED also filed a lawsuit last fall to stop the Martis Valley West project from going forward based on insufficient environmental review. That case is still in the courts.