

League appeals federal court decision to allow Stateline project

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By Kathryn Reed

Back to court – that is where the Sierra Colina project is going because the League to Save Lake Tahoe is appealing last month's ruling.

U.S. District Judge Robert Jones in Reno had ruled in the developer's favor in August. The League on Sept. 28 took action to continue with its legal challenge regarding coverage of the proposed Stateline development.

"There are volumes of scientific research that indicates this type of exemption from coverage restrictions threatens the Lake's water quality and clarity," Carl Young, interim executive director of the League, said in a statement. "The project's additional coverage will allow sediment and harmful pollutants to make their way through the watershed and enter Lake Tahoe, worsening the Lake's clarity."

So far, the League is in the minority with that way of thinking.

When Jones first heard testimony about the case this summer he all but called the suit frivolous.

Steve Kenninger and Gail Jaquish plan to turn the vacant 18 acres into 50 housing units. Environmental improvements have begun even with the project mired in a legal battle.

"Judge Jones found that Sierra Colina's stormwater management system exceeds current regulatory requirements and will

significantly reduce pollutant loads to Lake Tahoe compared to existing conditions,” Kenninger told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The certified EIS, which the League did not challenge, reached the same conclusion. The League’s positions are environmentally baseless and are harming the lake.”

Jaquish added, “Once again, the League promotes litigation obstructionism in Tahoe rather than environmental improvements and job creation for local workers.”

It will be up to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to decide if the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency made the correct decision or not in approving the project, as well as if the District Court judge was correct or not in his ruling.