

# EDC residents wage ballot battle over growth

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado County's growth wars are headed to the November ballot with unexpected drama, quixotic political alliances and developer dollars flowing in conflicting directions.

Local environmentalists and advocates have qualified separate November initiatives – Measure M and Measure O – that seek to protect rural lifestyles, prevent gridlock on Highway 50 and stop traffic-inducing subdivisions in the Sierra foothills region.

Those initiatives, plus a third measure originally backed by a Sacramento group representing commercial builders, are drawing financial opposition from housing developers as well as real estate and engineering firms that are banking on continued residential growth in the county of 180,000 residents.

At stake are competing visions of the future for the county, where a 2004 general growth plan anticipates 21,000 new houses.

The latest ballot battles come 16 years after a voter revolt over the county's approval of projects bringing 11,000 new houses to El Dorado Hills. Measure Y in 1998 prohibited any residential project of five or more units that caused or worsened traffic gridlock. It was reaffirmed by voters in 2008.

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