

Letter: TRPA needs to stop Squaw's development

To the community,

At this week's meeting of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Sierra Watch delivered a clear message to Tahoe decision-makers: Proposed development in Squaw Valley threatens their mission to protect Lake Tahoe.

I told the Governing Board, "That the proposed Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan would remake the region with development of a size, scale, and scope Squaw Valley – and North Lake Tahoe – has never seen. We encourage TRPA to participate in Placer County's public planning process."

KSL Capital Partners is seeking development entitlements from Placer County for the proposed Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan, which would include a series of 10-story tall high rises; an indoor water park with water slides, fake rivers, and indoor sky diving; and 300,000 square feet of commercial development.

New buildings would include more than 1,500 bedrooms. Proponents project that it would take 25 years to complete.

"If all the development were approved," I told TRPA, "it would make your job to protect Lake Tahoe even more difficult."

Of particular concern is traffic. Traffic in Tahoe is already a problem, with the key intersection in Tahoe City often stuck at what planners call "Level of Service F" – otherwise known as gridlock.

Proposed development in Squaw Valley would add more than 8,000 new daily car trips to the region's roadways on any summer weekend, many of which would head to Tahoe.

Increased traffic makes for increased air pollution; air pollution is a direct cause of reductions in the lake's famous clarity - TRPA's primary responsibility.

I was joined by local volunteers, clad in purple Keep Squaw True T-shirts.

For more information about Sierra Watch and its campaign to Keep Squaw True, contact Chase Schweitzer at cschweitzer@sierrawatch.org or 530.448.1506.

Tom Mooers, executive director of Sierra Watch