

# North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance

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*Jerry Wotel, Newsletter Editor*

## NTCAA News letter – September, 2009

### Kings Beach

On August 19, 2009 the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) released a Notice of Availability of the Draft Supplemental Impact Statement for a 60 day public review. In the notice TRPA explains, “After looking at a more thorough analysis of the traffic volumes, TRPA determined that additional traffic in the Kings Beach “grid” neighborhood could affect noise levels and air quality.” These are just two of the Environmental Thresholds that TRPA is mandated by the Compact to address, but a full environmental impact statement is intended to cover a broader range of impacts.

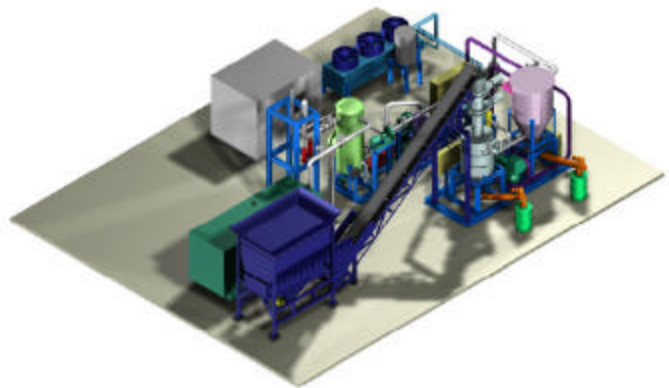
TRPA further states in the same notice, “These environmental resources were evaluated in the Final EA/EIR/EIS, but not necessarily across the geographic area that included the residential “grid” area of Kings Beach where cut-through traffic was expected to occur.” The fact is that Placer County failed to thoroughly analyze any environmental impacts to the “grid” or residential neighborhoods in the Draft or Final EIR/EIS documents because the project area was limited to the Commercial Core. What about public safety, environmental justice, social impacts, and cumulative impacts to the residential area? These impacts were only given cursory and inadequate review because the “grid” is not in the project area, so it was not the focus of analysis.

Critics have repeatedly made this point in written public comment and verbal comments at numerous public meetings. Now TRPA confirms this void in the environmental review process.

### Biomass Plant at North Tahoe

An appropriations bill approved by the U.S. Senate recently includes \$1 million for the design and construction phase of a biomass-to-energy facility at North Lake Tahoe. Placer County has launched several initiatives focused on biomass, which is organic material such as downed trees, branches and pine needles that winds up on forest floors.

Placer County is proposing to build a biomass plant on property in Kings Beach owned by NV Energy – the county's private-industry partner in the project. The photo shown is representative of a small wood-burning biomass plant. Is the proposed plant just a matter of scale? It would become a research and demonstration project where Placer County could team up with universities, federal agencies and state officials to demonstrate the potential of bio-



mass programs for reducing wildfire threats and producing commercial viable forms of energy. *(Why is this proposed for Kings Beach instead of a less populated area)?*

The U.S. Forest Service said that not all the slash piles can be turned into biomass. But having a facility nearby could make it more cost-effective for contractors logging on behalf of the Forest Service. Forest Service contracts with logging outfits don't say how slash piles must be dealt with. However, they say if they had something in the basin it would reduce transportation costs and might make it a more attractive option. *(The Forest Service costs would be reduced at the expense of the North Tahoe Community, and how many slash piles are in Kings Beach relative to other areas?)*

“Placer County, in partnership with Senator Feinstein, is leading the way in promoting biomass technology programs in the Sierra Nevada,” said 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery. “We are enormously grateful to the Senator for her help in obtaining this recent Department of Energy Grant for \$1 million. The potential benefits of this project are far-reaching. This will serve the local communities through job creation, watershed benefits, fire protection, improved air quality and a long-term investment in renewable energy.” *(Why must this experiment be performed in an environmentally sensitive area such as the Tahoe Basin?)*

Even if the challenged claims of reduced air pollution instead of slash pile burning were true, how would this plant in the Tahoe Basin affect the environment for its neighbors considering: air and noise pollution from the plant operation and delivery trucks next to a residential area, light pollution from required outside lighting, fire hazards (plant malfunction or spontaneous combustion of wood chip piles), and not to mention the character of the neighborhood.

The TRPA must weigh in heavily on the environmental impact of this proposal, as well as the Sierra Club and the League to Save Lake Tahoe, and every concerned citizen.

### **TRPA Appointees**

Casey Beyer, a California businessman with lifelong connections to Northern Nevada and the Lake Tahoe Basin, has been appointed to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Beyer replaces former California State Senator Tim Leslie who left the board in January. Beyer is a native of Northern Nevada whose family owned property in Tahoe for two generations. Today, Beyer is a consultant for independent energy companies who resides in Manhattan Beach.

Over the past two decades he has held a series of positions in both the public and private sectors.



Harmon Zuckerman, formerly the principal planner for Douglas County and member of TRPA's Advisory Planning Commission, has been named Director of TRPA's Regional Plan Update. Zuckerman brings more than 14 years of professional planning experience to the newly created position. He will oversee completion of the Regional Plan Update, a 20-year blueprint for revitalization of existing communities and continued environmental improvement for the Tahoe Basin. He is a resident of Minden, Nevada.

**Upcoming Events/Key Dates**

Agendas for TRPA Governing Board and APC, and also Placer County BOS are not available until a few days before the meeting. Therefore, it is difficult to provide a meaningful emphasis to the meetings. Other meetings/events not shown here, or changes, will be announced by email.

<b>October 6, Tuesday</b>	<b>Seasonal Flu Shots</b>	<b>9-11:30 am, NTFPD Station 52 Kings Beach</b>
<b>October 6, Tuesday</b>	<b>Seasonal Flu Shots</b>	<b>1:30-4 pm, NTFPD Station 51 Tahoe City</b>
October 6, Tuesday	Placer County BOS Mtg.	8:30 am, Auburn
October 7, Wednesday	NLTRA Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
October 8, Thursday	NTRAC Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
October 13, Tuesday	NTPUD Board Meeting	10 am, NTEC, Kings Beach
October 14, Wednesday	TRPA APC Meeting	9:30 am, TRPA Stateline Office
October 16, Friday	TCPUD Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room
October 16-18	Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference	NTEC, Kings Beach
October 20, Tuesday	Placer County BOS Meeting	8:30 am, Auburn
October 21, Wednesday	NTFPD Board Meeting	6 pm, TCPUD Board Room
October 28, Wednesday	TRPA Governing Board	9:30 am, TRPA Stateline Office
November 4, Wednesday	NLTRA Board Meeting	8:30 am, TCPUD Board Room

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency  
 NLTRA – North Lake Tahoe Resort Association  
 TCPUD – Tahoe City Public Utility District  
 NTEC – North Tahoe Event Center (NTCC)  
 BOS – Placer County Board of Supervisors

APC – Advisory Planning Commission  
 NTPUD – North Tahoe Public Utility District  
 NTFPD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District  
 NTRAC- North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council

***“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”***  
 .....Ronald Reagan