



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
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June 1, 2007

Mr. Mike Cavanaugh
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Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
P.O. Box 5310
Stateline, NV 89449

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Vista Village Workforce
Housing Project, Placer County, CA (CEQ# 20070208)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The need for affordable housing in the north Lake Tahoe area has been documented by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and Placer County (DEIS Chapter 3). EPA supports projects that are town-centered, transit- and pedestrian-oriented, preserves open space and environmental resources, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial, and retail uses. We commend the effort to provide professionally managed affordable housing to local workers and their families which will reduce long-distance commutes, traffic congestion, and air quality impacts.

Based on our review, we have rated the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as Environmental Concerns – Adequate (EC-1) (see enclosed “*Summary of Rating Definitions*”). While we support the project concept, the Lake Tahoe Basin is non-attainment for the California air quality standard for particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter (PM₁₀) and is above the TRPA significance thresholds for ozone, visibility, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), water quality, and wood smoke (p. 5.6-12). We are concerned additional development, especially when combined with other identified local projects (Table 5.12-1, pps. 5.12-3 to 5.12-8), will exacerbate these conditions.

To minimize adverse environmental effects of the new development we encourage implementation of the environmentally superior alternative, Alternative D – 72 Units (p. 6-4). This alternative would provide affordable housing without exceeding the allowable 30% ground coverage for this land capability category and would be consistent with Regional Plan and TRPA land use goals and policies (p. 1-27). This alternative

would also provide a transition zone between the higher density Tahoe Vista Community Plan and lower density Tahoe Estates subdivision (p. 5.3-20).

Regardless of the selected alternative, we recommend the project utilize the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard for green building. LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor air quality. More information about the LEED green building rating system is available at <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CategoryID=19&>. For questions on green building, please contact Timonie Hood with EPA Region 9's Solid Waste Office at 415-972-3282.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released for public review, please send one (1) hard copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3846 or Laura Fujii, the lead reviewer for this project. Laura can be reached at (415) 972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure:
Summary of EPA Rating Definitions

cc: Bill Combs, Placer County Planning Department
Jacques Landy, Lake Tahoe Basin Coordinator, Region 9 EPA