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July 16, 2015

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VIA E-MAIL [CDRAECS@PLACER.CA.GOV](mailto:CDRAECS@PLACER.CA.GOV)  
AND FEDEX

Placer County Community Development Resource Agency,  
Environmental Coordination Services  
Attn: Maywan Krach,  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

Re: **Comment Letter on Draft EIR for Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan (PSPA 20110385, State Clearinghouse No. 2012102023)**

Dear Ms. Krach:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("DEIR") for the proposed Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan (the "Project"). This letter is submitted on behalf of the Squaw Valley Lodge Owners Association ("SVLOA"). SVLOA is a 218 member/unit condominium style hotel located on Squaw Peak Road, past the Cable Car building, and adjacent to the Project area.

SVLOA is enthusiastic about the potential opportunities the Project will bring to Squaw Valley, and encouraged by the revisions the applicant has made during the application process in response to community concerns. This optimism is tempered, however, by the need to fully understand and appropriately evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the Project. In that respect, the DEIR fails on several issues.

"CEQA is essentially an environmental full disclosure statute." (*Rural Landowners Assn. v. City Council* (1983) 143 Cal.App.3d 1013, 1020.) The purpose of public review "is to provide public agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effect which a proposed project is likely to have on the environment." (*Id.* (citing Pub. Res. Code § 21061.) Put another way, it "demonstrate[s] to an apprehensive citizenry that the agency has, in fact, analyzed and considered the ecological implications of its action." (*Schoen v. Department of Forestry and Fire Protection* (1997) 58 Cal.App.4th 556, 573.)

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Idaho Minnesota Oregon Utah Washington



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The DEIR falls short of its purpose of disclosing and mitigating potentially significant impacts, and neglects to demonstrate that the County has in fact fully analyzed environmental impacts resulting from the Project. Specifically, the DEIR:

- Fails to analyze and mitigate traffic impacts at a key Project intersection: Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road;
- Utilizes an improper threshold of significance to analyze construction noise impacts, and fails to analyze feasible mitigation measures to mitigate the significant and unavoidable impacts on both a Project and cumulative level;
- Omits analysis of impacts related to potential removal/relocation of propane facilities which currently serve users outside of the Project area; and
- Impermissibly defers analysis related to operational impacts of proposed water supply wells and associated facilities.

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cont.

**A. Traffic/Transportation**

One of the most glaring omissions of the DEIR is its failure to analyze potential traffic impacts at the intersection of Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road. This intersection presents unique and potentially significant impacts because of the confluence of uses, including skier drop-offs, residents accessing SVLOA and Granite Chief homes, PlumpJack guests, First Ascent Condo owners accessing their parking garage, and pedestrians/skiers walking to and from the tram and tram plaza.

The DEIR states that study intersections and roadways were selected for analysis based in part on comments raised in response to the Notice of Preparation (“NOP”). (DEIR, p. 9-1.) In its November 8, 2012 comment letter on the NOP, SVLOA specifically requested that the DEIR evaluate the Squaw Valley Road/Squaw Peak Road intersection, declaring that “[c]urrent traffic patterns also create pedestrian/vehicle conflicts near the intersection of Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road. And, parking along Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road in this area has created unsafe conditions during snow events.” SVLOA also requested that the DEIR evaluate specific mitigation measures to lessen Project related impacts at this intersection. Despite these very specific requests, which plainly identified potentially significant impacts at this intersection, the DEIR bafflingly ignored this vital Project intersection.

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To appropriately evaluate a project’s potential environmental impacts, an EIR must examine changes to the existing physical conditions expected to result from the project. (Guidelines §15126.2(a).) In conducting this assessment, an EIR ordinarily compares the impacts anticipated by the project with preproject environmental conditions. (*Communities for a Better Env’t v. South Coast Air Quality Mgmt. Dist.* (2010) 48 Cal.4th 310, 321; see also *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. City of Turlock* (2006) 138 Cal.App.4th 273, 289, overruled on other grounds in *Hernandez v. City of Hanford* (2007) 41 Cal.4th 279 (a physical change “is identified by comparing existing physical conditions with the physical conditions that are predicted to exist at a later point in time, after the proposed activity has been implemented. [Citation.] The difference between these two sets of physical conditions is the relevant physical change.”).) Use of the proper baseline is critical to a meaningful assessment of a project’s environmental impacts. (*Communities for a Better Env’t*, 48 Cal.4th at 320.)

The DEIR excludes any baseline information regarding the Squaw Valley Road/Squaw Peak Road intersection. This intersection is a major circulation corridor for both pedestrians and vehicles. It serves as the primary access point for pedestrians/skiers to access the mountain. It is also used for vehicular travel by residents, lodging guests, and commercial vehicle deliveries. The DEIR should include a description and analysis of current usage patterns, user conflicts, and safety information regarding this intersection. Based on this baseline information, the DEIR must then analyze whether the major changes with regard to circulation and parking proposed by the Project (e.g. new parking areas, new commercial vehicle access points, changes to employee access, tour bus drop-offs, etc.) will result in potentially significant impacts.

The omission of the Squaw Valley Road/Squaw Peak Road intersection is a fatal flaw in the DEIR, which must be remedied by recirculation to allow for meaningful public review and comment. (Pub. Res. Code §21092.1.) The analysis of this intersection must include not only traffic counts, but also information regarding traffic congestion, pedestrian usage, conflicts with parked cars during snow events, and the overall safety of this intersection. (*Taxpayers for Accountable School Bond Spending v. San Diego Unified School District* (2013) 215 Cal.App.4th 1013, 1055, fn. 29; Guidelines, Appen. G, § XI, subd. (d)<sup>1</sup> (in determining whether a project will have significant impacts, a lead agency should consider whether the project will “[s]ubstantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?”))

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<sup>1</sup> The Guidelines for implementation of CEQA are contained in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations and are herein referred to as “Guidelines”.

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Of particular concern is congestion at this intersection, and how Project related circulation impacts may create barriers for emergency vehicular access. Without an appropriate analysis and mitigation of the circulation impacts of this intersection, there is no way to ensure a free flow of traffic to allow for unimpeded emergency vehicular access up Squaw Peak Road. Storm and snow events further compound this issue, and because of congestion and illegal parking in this area, snow plows are often unable to access Squaw Peak Road, and it is left unplowed, further hindering access to the homes and condominiums up Squaw Peak Road. The unique design and circulation features of this intersection, coupled with Project generated vehicular and pedestrian usage, have the potential to lead to significant safety impacts that must be analyzed in the DEIR.

In addition, the cumulative impact analysis section of the DEIR must be revised to assess the impacts of the PlumpJack redevelopment project on this intersection, in conjunction with Project impacts.

Only after a Project and cumulative level analysis of this intersection is completed can the County assess feasible mitigation measures for any resulting significant impacts. Feasible mitigation measures for this intersection that should be evaluated in the DEIR include the following:

- Construction of a third right-turn only lane southbound at the intersection of Squaw Valley Road/Squaw Peak Road;
- Reconfiguration of the Squaw Valley Road roundabout to allow cars to turn left into the First Ascent parking garage without having to loop around to Squaw Peak Road;
- Traffic control and traffic officers during peak hours;
- Enforcement plan for restricted parking areas on Squaw Peak Road;
- Pedestrian safe sidewalks and barricades separating pedestrian areas from the street.

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**B. Construction Noise**

The DEIR erroneously evaluates potential construction noise impacts only in relation to Placer County's liberal noise ordinance, which exempts construction noise from standard thresholds if conducted within daytime hours (6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday). (DEIR, p. 11-14; 11-17.) Under CEQA, however, a Project may result in significant noise impacts even if it meets the standards

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contained in an agency's noise ordinance. (*Keep our Mountains Quiet v. County of Santa Clara* (May 7, 2015) 236 Cal.App.4th 714, 732-33.) Any analysis relating to noise impacts must consider whether the Project would result in substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project, and if so, it must appropriately mitigate those impacts. (*Id.*; Guidelines, Appen. G, § XI, subd. (d).) The DEIR failed to do this, and therefore, underestimated the significance of noise impacts many sensitive receptors will face during years of construction.

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With regard to cumulative impacts, the DEIR notes that several approved and proposed projects within the Valley could be constructed at the same time as the Project, (including the adjacent PumpJack Hotel redevelopment) and combine with Project-related construction noise. However, the DEIR concludes that daytime construction activity would be exempt per the Placer County noise ordinance, and therefore, would not substantially increase exposure of sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels during the more sensitive time of the day or result in a substantial temporary increase in noise. (DEIR, p. 18-33 - 34.) Again, the DEIR erroneously utilizes a threshold of significance that exempts construction noise from mandatory noise standards, leading to a gross undervaluing of the significance of cumulative construction noise impacts.

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The failure to properly analyze construction noise impacts may have also resulted in the DEIR's exclusion of basic, feasible mitigation measures that could lessen significant and unavoidable noise impacts. CEQA requires that an EIR describe feasible mitigation measures that can minimize the project's significant environmental effects. (Guidelines §§15121(a), 15126.4(a).) If several measures are available to mitigate a significant adverse impact, the EIR should discuss each measure and identify the reason for selecting a particular measure. (Guidelines §15126.4(a).) An agency cannot approve a project if it is feasible to adopt mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially reduce the project's significant environmental impacts. (Pub Res C §§21002, 21002.1(b); Guidelines §15021(a).)

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The DEIR blatantly omits consideration of a patently feasible mitigation measure, which was identified in SVLOA's May 24, 2014 comment letter on the revised NOP. The proposed measure would limit noise generating construction activities near sensitive areas to the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. This restriction would eliminate construction noise during early morning (6:00 am - 8:59 am) and evening (5:01 pm - 8:00 pm) hours, times where sensitive receptors are particularly susceptible to such noise impacts. This mitigation measure must be assessed as part of the environmental review for the Project.

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**C. Public Services and Utilities**

The DEIR correctly notes that SVLOA currently receives propane service from an aboveground 20,000 gallon tank located just south of the Red Dog Maintenance Building, on property owned by the applicant. (DEIR p. 14-9.) What the DEIR does not disclose, is whether this tank will be removed as part of the Project, and if so, how replacement service will be provided to the current users.

Page 14-39 of the DEIR provides that “[a]ny changes to propane or electricity infrastructure needed to deliver these utilities to the Specific Plan area are included as part of the project and the environmental effects of implementing these improvements are evaluated throughout this DEIR.” This analysis improperly focuses on changes to utility infrastructure needed to deliver utilities only to the Specific Plan Area. The DEIR fails to consider how any changes to the utility infrastructure may impact those areas adjacent to the Specific Plan Area that are currently served by the utilities in question, and whether there may be any environmental impacts resulting from the change in utility service/facilities. If the existing propane tank serving SVLOA and other users is proposed to be removed or relocated as part of the Project, the DEIR should include a mitigation measure requiring the Applicant to install appropriate infrastructure and provide adequate facilities to serve these users from the relocated/new facilities.

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**D. New Water Supply Wells**

The DEIR concludes that six new wells are required to meet both Project and future demands, however, it impermissibly defers analysis and mitigation of impacts related to the specific location of the wells/pumphouses. While the DEIR depicts well sites within the vicinity of sensitive residential and lodging uses, it does not analyze the impacts that operation of the wells in each location may have. Further, if alternative locations are chosen for the wells, the DEIR only requires subsequent information related to water quantity and quality, and does not require any further analysis of potential operational impacts the well/pumphouses may have on adjacent uses, including aesthetic and noise effects. At a minimum, the DEIR should include mitigation measures for the wells that set specific performance standards for noise impacts, and appropriate measures to reduce operational noise. The wells should also be subject to Mitigation Measure 8-2b, which requires Design Review approval from the Placer County Design/Site Review Committee. Such Design Review should include an analysis of the compatibility of the well/pumphouses with the Plan Area Development Standards prescribed in Appendix B of the Specific Plan.

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Based on the foregoing, SVLOA respectfully requests that the DEIR be revised to address these outstanding issues, and that the traffic analysis be recirculated so that the public can review and provide meaningful input on potential traffic and safety impacts related to the Squaw Valley Road/Squaw Peak Road intersection. Thank you for your attention to our comments.

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Respectfully,

Greg C. Gatto

cc: Squaw Valley Lodge Owners Association Board

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Squaw Valley Lodge Owners Association Board  
Greg C. Gatto, Stoel Rives LLP  
July 16, 2015

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- 010-1 The comment provides a summary of concerns detailed in the remainder of this letter. See responses to comments 010-2 through 010-7, below.
- 010-2 See the Master Response regarding traffic issues at Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road and elements of the project design that would alleviate existing congestion at this location, rather than exacerbating the problem, thus, ensuring that the proposed project would not cause a significant adverse traffic, emergency access, or safety impact by adding or otherwise encouraging visitors to use this location rather than access the mountain and amenities through the Village. Because the project would actually reduce impacts, as compared to existing conditions, no further mitigation is required, such as the measure proposed in the comment. That said, as explained in the Master Response, the project would include pedestrian safe sidewalks and structures to direct pedestrian flow as suggested by the commenter. The additional information in the FEIR on this issue does not constitute “significant new information” requiring recirculation. See also the Master Response regarding recirculation.
- Also, the DEIR does include the PlumpJack Redevelopment Project in the analysis of cumulative impacts, including cumulative traffic impacts. See the portion of Table 18-2 on page 18-5 of the DEIR.
- 010-3 See the Master Response regarding the 25-year construction period, and the Master Response regarding noise and the effects of noise on sensitive receptors. As noted in the Master Responses and response to comment 010-4, below, the DEIR’s significance conclusion was not based solely on the County’s noise ordinance.
- 010-4 The commenter states that the significance of cumulative construction noise impacts was grossly undervalued because the DEIR relies on a threshold of significance that exempts construction noise from mandatory noise standards. This is not an accurate reflection of the construction noise analysis. The construction noise analysis in the DEIR does describe the noise ordinance and identifies its exemption for daytime construction noise. However, the DEIR does not rely on this exemption to make a less than significant impact conclusion. The DEIR takes the opposite approach, evaluating daytime construction noise and determining impacts would be significant, due in large part to the extended construction buildout period over many years. Also see the Master Response regarding noise for a discussion of the DEIR’s reliance on the County’s Noise Ordinance and the County’s process to regulate construction noise that is proposed outside of the allowable hours (i.e., an Administrative Review Permit). With respect to the DEIR’s cumulative noise analysis, Impact 18-31 in the DEIR discussed all potential cumulative construction activities and concluded that the cumulative noise impact would be significant and unavoidable. Construction-related mitigation was recommended and is included in Chapter 11, “Noise,” of the DEIR.
- 010-5 See the Master Response regarding noise, which addresses, amongst other issues, the feasibility of reduced construction hours.
- 010-6 Propane is currently delivered to the Squaw Valley Lodge via the Squaw Valley System, one of two independent propane systems in the project area (MacKay & Soms 2015). This system is supplied by an aboveground 20,000-gallon tank that is located just south of the Red Dog Maintenance Building. With implementation of the VSVSP, the capacity of this system would be transferred to a tank farm located in the mountain maintenance facility – a location that is less

prominent in the plan area while being easier for delivery trucks to access. The upgraded system, which would supply the existing and proposed ski resort facilities and serve the Squaw Valley Lodge complex and the Red Wolf complex, would be owned and operated by Squaw Valley Ski Corporation (or one of its affiliates). The proposed relocation of propane tanks to a central location would not affect uses served by the existing tanks, including areas adjacent to the plan area. For additional discussion of this issue, see the Master Response regarding the mountain maintenance facility (propane storage). Additionally, a propane facility is proposed on Lot 28 as part of the project; however, it is currently unknown if this facility or the mountain maintenance facility would serve Squaw Valley Lodge.

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As indicated in Chapter 3, “Project Description,” of the DEIR (page 3-22), water would be provided for the VSVSP through a system of existing and proposed wells. The precise number and location of wells is not known at this time (although a reasonable well development scenario was identified to support the detailed groundwater modelling conducted to support the WSA and EIR analysis). Although the specific details of the ultimate water well design are not available, the effects of constructing and operating the wells on ground surface conditions are qualitatively evaluated throughout the DEIR as part of the overall project (groundwater effects from well operations are quantitatively described and evaluated in great detail in the WSA and EIR). Additional project-specific analysis will be provided as part of future project phases, as described in Section 1.1, “Type and Purpose of the Draft Environmental Impact Report,” of the DEIR. Because the proposed water supply wells are elements of the VSVSP, mitigation measures provided in the DEIR would be applied to the wells wherever appropriate, including Mitigation Measure 8-2b, which requires compliance with plan area development standards to reduce the visual impacts.

The potential for the VSVSP to expose existing sensitive receptors to new or additional project-generated stationary noise, including operation of the new wells/pumps, during project operation is addressed in Impact 11-3 in Chapter 11, “Noise,” of the DEIR.

Also, see the Master Response regarding noise; and response to comment 09-59, which explains the programmatic level of detail in the DEIR.

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The comment states that the DEIR should be revised to address the above outstanding issues and the traffic analysis should be recirculated so the public can provide meaningful input on the potential traffic and safety impacts at Squaw Valley Road and Squaw Peak Road. However, for the reasons discussed under responses to comments 010-2 through 010-7, the DEIR analysis is adequate and no changes to the DEIR in response to these comments are necessary.

CEQA requires recirculation of a DEIR when the lead agency adds “significant new information” to an EIR after public notice is given of the availability of a DEIR for public review, but before EIR certification (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15088.5). Recirculation is not required unless the EIR is changed in a way that would deprive the public of the opportunity to comment on significant new information, including a new significant impact in which no feasible mitigation is available to fully mitigate the impact (thus resulting in a significant and unavoidable impact), a substantial increase in the severity of a disclosed environmental impact, or development of a new feasible alternative or mitigation measures that would clearly lessen environmental impacts but which the project proponent declines to adopt (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15088.5[a]). Recirculation is not required where the new information added to the EIR merely clarifies or amplifies or makes insignificant modifications in an adequate EIR (State CEQA Guidelines CCR Section 15088.5[b]). See also the Master Response regarding recirculation.

As discussed in response to comment O10-2, the Master Response regarding traffic issues at Squaw Peak Road and Squaw Valley, the study of the intersection of Squaw Peak Road and Squaw Valley Road does not result in a new significant impact that cannot be feasibly fully mitigated, a substantial increase in the severity of a disclosed environmental impact, or development of a new feasible alternative. Therefore, recirculation of the traffic analysis, or the DEIR as a whole, is not required as a result of the issues raised in this comment letter.

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Condominium Property Association • Olympic Valley, California

**VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

July 1, 2015

Ms. Maywan Krach  
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Environmental Coordination Services  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Re:           Comments of the Tavern Inn Condominium Association Regarding  
              the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Village at Squaw  
              Valley Specific Plan**

Dear Ms. Krach:

The Tavern Inn Condominium Association (“Tavern Inn”) provides the following comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Report (“DEIR”) for the Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan. Our comments primarily address the so-called East Parcel portion of the project area. Tavern Inn is located across Squaw Valley Road from the East Parcel, and it is a community of 56 individually owned units. Tavern Inn is not a “hotel,” “lodging complex,” or “commercial” operation as is described in the DEIR (see, e.g., 4-20, 8-25, 8-39, and 8-52). It is a community of homeowners and residents, some of whom live at Tavern Inn all year. We provide these comments because the DEIR does not adequately assess the impacts the proposed development of the East Parcel will have on the neighboring community. Indeed, such impacts are either ignored or treated in a cursory and conclusory matter. CEQA requires more; it requires a full analysis of possible environmental impacts. Thus, the DEIR should be revised to address the issues raised in this letter.

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As you know, in a letter dated March 20, 2014, Tavern Inn provided comments in response to the Revised Notice of Preparation. We are disappointed to see that the DEIR addresses very few of the comments raised in our March 20, 2014 letter. We have attached a copy of that letter here as Exhibit A and incorporate that letter by reference into this comment letter. We request that the response to this comment letter also address the issues we raised in our March 20, 2014 letter.

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We are also concerned that the plan or layout for the East Parcel is not final. In particular, we understand that the project applicant may be considering reverting to an earlier design for the East Parcel similar to what was presented in the January 2014 version of the specific plan. This would be a significant alteration to the design of the East Parcel. The DEIR does not assess the impacts that this design configuration would have on the environment. We recognize that the DEIR is intended as a program level EIR and the plan for the East Parcel is described as a "concept"; however, this does not provide license to ignore potentially significant impacts that the project could have on the environment. The DEIR examines the East Parcel based on the "concept" described in the April 2015 version of the specific plan. If that concept is changed in ways that significantly shifts the location of uses within the East Parcel, than the potential impacts such changes could have on the environment need to be assessed in a revised DEIR.

011-3

Our specific comments are discussed below by DEIR topic.

**LAND USE**

**Division of Community**

Impact 4.1 (pp. 4.20–4.21) addresses whether the planned development will divide an existing community. With respect to the East Parcel, the analysis is factually and legally flawed. The analysis is based on the following statement:

Development of the East Parcel with employee housing, off-site parking, a community market, and activities that are ancillary to the Village, such as shipping, receiving, and distribution would not physically divide these elements of the existing Olympic Valley community because the East Parcel is already used for resort operations. (p. 4-20)

011-4

To equate the existing use of the East Parcel, which is vacant land occasionally used for snow and equipment storage, with the planned uses of the site is not accurate. There is nothing similar about the existing and planned uses. No buildings currently exist on the East Parcel. There is no employee housing, market, parking lot, or shipping and receiving facility presently on the East Parcel. Thus, it is factually inaccurate to conclude that the current use and the planned future use are similar simply because both can be described as "resort operations." This is also a legal flaw. CEQA requires an analysis of the impacts of the proposed project. However, by assuming that the future use of the East Parcel will be similar to the current use (i.e., resort operations), the DEIR fails to adequately describe and assess the proposed project. As a result of these factual and legal errors, the conclusion that the impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required is not supported.

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Indeed, the proposed development of the East Parcel would fundamentally alter and divide the community. The east end of Olympic Valley is residential. To place large commercial facilities such as a shipping and receiving facility, market and a parking lot on the East Parcel would divide an existing residential neighborhood. The analysis in the DEIR implies that Squaw Creek and Squaw Valley Road already divide the neighborhood, but this does not justify nor mitigate the impact that proposed development will have on dividing the community.

Also, the DEIR (p.4-20) describes the Tavern Inn Condominiums as a "lodging complex." If this choice of words is meant to imply that Tavern Inn is a lodge or condo-hotel, that assumption is wrong. Tavern Inn is composed of 56 individually owned condominium units with no unified management for rentals or lodging. It is not a commercial operation as described in the DEIR. (see, e.g., p. 8-52). To the extent that the DEIR is trying to imply that Tavern Inn is something other than a residential complex consistent with the surrounding residential use of the neighborhood, that assumption is wrong. Describing Tavern Inn as a hotel, lodge or commercial operation cannot be used as an excuse for not assessing the impacts that the proposed development of the East Parcel will have on the residents of Tavern Inn.

The DEIR must be revised to properly address the impact the proposed development of the East Parcel will have on dividing the community. Mitigation measures that should be considered include re-locating commercial (i.e., non-residential uses) such as the shipping and receiving complex, market, and visitor parking lot to a different location.

**Long-Term Land Use Conflicts**

Also, for the same reasons discussed in the above section (and incorporated here), the analysis of long-term land use conflicts (pp. 4-26-4-27) is flawed. The DEIR makes the following statement:

Similarly, development of the East Parcel with employee housing, off-site parking, a community market, and activities that are ancillary to the Village, such as shipping, receiving, and distribution has the potential to create land use conflicts with surrounding residential areas; however, the East Parcel is already used for resort operations and would provide a logical location for employee housing because residential is an existing land use in the area. (p. 4-26).

The first part of this sentence lists the potential conflicts. The second part of the sentence, however, dismisses the conflicts by suggesting employee housing is consistent with the existing residential land use. The problem with this

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analysis is it ignores conflicts caused by the other enumerated uses: “off-site parking, a community market, and activities that are ancillary to the Village, such as shipping, receiving, and distribution.” Because the analysis is incomplete, the conclusion that the impact will be less than significant and no mitigation is required is factually and legally unsupportable.

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cont.

The DEIR must be revised to fully assess the long-term land use conflicts associated with the proposed development of the East Parcel. Mitigation measures that should be considered include re-locating to a different location or scaling back the commercial (i.e., non-residential uses) such as the shipping and receiving complex, market, and off-site parking so as to eliminate land use conflicts.

**TRAFFIC**

The DEIR fails to assess the impact on traffic of ingress and egress to and from the proposed East Parcel development. Apparently, this was done because (according to the DEIR at p. 9-44) “access to the East Parcel is assumed to be provided by one or more driveways located on Squaw Valley Road.” The fact that access to the East Parcel will be by “driveway” rather than a county intersection does not diminish the impact that traffic entering and exiting the East Parcel will have on Squaw Valley Road. Indeed, it is conceivable that the traffic coming and going from the East Parcel could far exceed many of the Placer County intersections analyzed in the DEIR.

011-6

The proposal for the East Parcel is to locate housing for 300 employees, off-site parking for employees and day-use skiers, shipping and receiving facilities, and a market. This is a lot of vehicles entering and exiting the East Parcel every day. Even if the employees living on the East Parcel rely mostly on shuttle buses to get to work, the impact on local traffic in the vicinity of the East Parcel will be significant, particularly on high volume traffic days. Add trucks coming and going from the shipping and receiving facility and the problem only becomes more severe. None of this is assessed in the DEIR.

The DEIR must be revised to fully assess the impact that ingress and egress from the proposed East Parcel development will have on local traffic conditions. This assessment should include impacts to ingress and egress from neighboring properties such as Tavern Inn, Squaw Valley Academy, and the fire station. Mitigation measures should include: (1) lane configuration and traffic control options that could reduce the disruption to local traffic, (2) restricting East Parcel driveways to travel in one direction, (3) restricting left-hand turns from the East Parcel that would cut across traffic, and (4) prohibiting trucks that are entering or exiting the shipping and receiving facility from stopping, waiting, pausing, or idling on Squaw Valley Road.

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**NOISE**

**East Parcel Shipping and Receiving Facility Noise**

The DEIR assessment of noise associated with the proposed East Parcel development is inadequate. In particular, the DEIR makes no effort to assess the impact that locating the shipping and receiving facility on the East Parcel will have on the existing neighborhood. The “loading dock” at the East Parcel is discussed on page 11-26, but the analysis is cursory and conclusory. It is not supported by any facts or evidence. It is merely speculation. The DEIR needs to fully and properly address the noise impacts associated with locating the shipping and receiving facility on the East Parcel. This includes the impact of trucks and activities on the site as well as trucks entering and exiting the facility. Indeed, locating a shipping and receiving facility within an existing residential neighborhood in the first place is problematic. The DEIR fails to acknowledge and address this fact.

While some mitigation measures associated with East Parcel shipping and receiving facility are discussed in the DEIR (p. 11-28), the list of mitigation measures is not adequate. For example, there is no discussion of moving the shipping and receiving facility to a location where it would not impact any sensitive receptors. Other mitigation measures that should be evaluated include constructing sound walls, designing the layout of the facility to minimize the need for trucks to backup, limiting the operation of the facility to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and restricting the ability of trucks to stop or idle on Squaw Valley Road while waiting to enter the facility.

The DEIR must be revised to fully address the noise impacts associated with locating the shipping and receiving facility on the East Parcel and expand the assessment of possible mitigation measures. Also, we understand that the design for the East Parcel is not even settled, and that the location of the shipping and receiving facility as well as other land uses on the East Parcel could change—i.e., the project applicant may revert to an earlier design for the East Parcel proposed in the January 2014 version of the specific plan. This raises serious questions about the adequacy of the DEIR, and whether the design and scope of the project is sufficiently settled to allow for a proper assessment of noise impacts.

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**Traffic Noise**

The analysis of the impacts of traffic noise is also cursory and conclusory. For example, the DEIR makes the following statement in an effort to dismiss the impact of traffic noise:

This [traffic noise] is expected to affect outdoor areas; because of the climate, residences in this area likely already have dual pane windows and insulation that effectively attenuates noise

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to below the 45 dBA Ldn noise standard for interior spaces.  
(p. 11-32)

This is mere speculation. CEQA requires more than speculation. It requires facts and evidence. The DEIR’s assessment of impacts from traffic noise is not supported by facts and evidence.

In addition, the DEIR needs to assess meaningful mitigation measures to reduce traffic related noise. For example, the use of landscaping, sound walls or other barriers to reduce noise impacts from traffic should be evaluated.

The DEIR must be revised to fully address noise impacts associated with traffic and evaluate all possible mitigation measures.

**Other East Parcel Activities**

The DEIR makes no effort to address noise impacts associated with locating a market and employee housing on the East Parcel. Since these impacts are not even evaluated, no mitigation measures are proposed. This is a significant oversight that must be addressed in a revised DEIR.

**VISUAL RESOURCES**

The analysis of impacts to visual resources associated with the East Parcel is flawed because it ignores residents as an impacted viewer group. It concludes that the visual impact would be less than significant to visitors entering Squaw Valley because the existing view is only average (see, e.g., pp. 8-49-8-50). This is not only cursory and conclusory, it is an entirely subjective conclusion that ignores the residents who live in the area.

Moreover, the analysis is flawed because it describes the uses on the south side of Squaw Valley as “commercial” (see, e.g., pp. 8-25, 8-39, and 8-52). This is nonsense—it is factually wrong. Tavern Inn is not a commercial operation. It is a residential community. The DEIR seemingly assumes that the people who reside in Tavern Inn value their view less than people who live in single family residents. Further, the DEIR also ignores the students who board in the school directly across the street from the East Parcel by describing that use as “commercial” as well. The DEIR must be revised to accurately describe the residential nature of the land use on the south side of Squaw Valley Road. By describing Tavern Inn and Squaw Valley Academy as “commercial operations,” the DEIR improperly dismisses the visual impact that the development would have on the people who reside across the street from the East Parcel.

Also, while the DEIR acknowledges that there are single family residents to the north and west of the East Parcel, it ignores those residents in

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cont.

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reaching its conclusion that impacts to visual resources would be less than significant.

The DEIR must be revised to include a full analysis of the impact to visual resources caused by the proposed development on the East Parcel. The analysis must include the residents who live in the area, including the residents on the south side of Squaw Valley Road. In addition, appropriate mitigation measures must be identified and assessed such as reducing the height and size of buildings, reducing the intensity of development on the East Parcel, and avoiding the use of long, blocky buildings that would give the neighborhood an urban look.

011-10  
cont.

Finally, the visual analysis in the DEIR is based on the “concept” of the East Parcel described in the April 2015 revised specific plan, and not the design described in the January 2014 version of the plan. If the project applicant were to revert to the January 2014 design of the East Parcel, the DEIR will need to be revised to assess the impact that this change would have on visual resource. In particular, it would need to assess the impact of creating a line of 35-foot high apartment buildings along Squaw Valley Road that would effectively turn that portion of the road into an urban canyon.

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**EMPLOYEE HOUSING**

Chapter 5 of the DEIR evaluates changes to employee housing supply and demand caused by the project. The DEIR proposes providing for employee housing on the East Parcel. However, there is no discussion in the DEIR of other alternatives for employee housing. The DEIR notes that there are other options: construction of off-site employee housing, dedication of land for needed units, or payment of an in-lieu fee (see p. 5-7). None of these other options are discussed. This is an oversight that must be addressed in a revised DEIR. The DEIR must evaluate other options for providing employee housing that could reduce or eliminate the impacts associated with placing all employee housing on the East Parcel.

011-12

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

A recognized archeological site—CA-PLA-164—is located on the East Parcel. The DEIR notes that the proposed development does not currently envision ground disturbance in the vicinity of this archeological site, which implies that future ground disturbance could happen (p. 7-21). All efforts should be made to avoid ground disturbance of this site or any other archeological site on the East Parcel. Also, it is not clear from the DEIR that the East Parcel has been sufficiently evaluated and surveyed to identify all archeological resources on the site. In addition, a Native American monitor should be on-site during all ground disturbance activities at the East Parcel and not just when ground disturbance happens within 100 feet of CA-PLA-164. Finally, the DEIR does not discuss what

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impact the post-construction use of the East Parcel might have on CA-PLA-164 or other archeological resources that may exist on the East Parcel.

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cont.

**CONCLUSION**

CEQA requires recirculation of an EIR when significant new information is added to the document after notice and public review of the document. The issues raised in our letter clearly identify areas where significant additional information and analysis regarding the East Parcel is required. This new information and analysis will require revision and recirculation of the DEIR.

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We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the DEIR.

Very truly yours,



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# Exhibit A



TAVERN INN

Condominium Property Association • Olympic Valley, California

**VIA E-MAIL AND FEDERAL EXPRESS**

March 20, 2014

Ms. Maywan Krach  
Community Development Technician  
Placer County, Planning Services Division  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Re:           Comments of the Tavern Inn Condominium Association in Response  
to Revised NOP of a Draft EIR for the Proposed Village at Squaw  
Valley Specific Plan**

Dear Ms. Krach:

I write on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Tavern Inn Condominium Association ("Tavern Inn Board") in response to the Revised Notice of Preparation ("NOP") issued by the County regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan ("Draft EIR"). The Tavern Inn community consists of 56 condominium units located directly across Squaw Valley Road from the East Parcel portion of the proposed project. The Tavern Inn Board is concerned about the adverse impact the proposed development of the East Parcel will have on the Tavern Inn community and the local neighborhood. We write to request that the County, in preparing the Draft EIR, fully consider these potential impacts, as well as consider mitigation measure and alternatives. Our specific concerns and requests regarding the East Parcel are outlined in this letter.

As a preliminary matter, we note that the East Parcel has received little attention and review in the planning process to date. For example, it is ignored in the October 12, 2012 Initial Study. Yet the revised Specific Plan proposes intensive development of this 9 acre parcel including employee housing consisting of 264 bedrooms, three levels of parking for 1,000 vehicles, and a shipping and

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receiving facility. We also understand that the project applicant is considering locating the propane storage for the Village on the East Parcel. The proposal to locate propane storage on the East Parcel must be evaluated in the Draft EIR, including impacts associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of the propane tanks and associated plumbing. The scale and scope of the proposed development of the East Parcel seems inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood, and it would radically change the east end of Squaw Valley. This cumulative impact must be considered as part of the Draft EIR as well.

### **Aesthetics**

The impact on aesthetics of the East Parcel development will be significant. Almost the entire parcel will be covered by a structure or set of structures up to 35 feet high. The structure(s) will abut Squaw Valley Road with virtually no setback. With the location of the public services building and school across the road, the effect will turn this stretch of Squaw Valley Road into an urban canyon similar to what one might experience in San Francisco, but out of place in Olympic Valley. The structure(s) will be visible from Tavern Inn, Squaw Valley Academy and from homes on the north side of Squaw Valley Creek. The structure(s) will also be visible from the creek and nearby valley and mountain trails. The Draft EIR must evaluate these impacts. Mitigation measures the Draft EIR should consider include: (1) a minimum 50-foot setback from Squaw Valley Road for all structures; (2) staggering of structures that abut Squaw Valley Road to avoid the visual effect of a wall; (3) landscaping along Squaw Valley Road that screens the development from the road and neighbors; (4) design for the employee housing units consistent with a residential neighborhood in the mountains rather than a city apartment building; (5) ground level parking only for residents that is intermixed with the housing units; (6) reducing the height of the proposed structures so they do not obstruct views; (7) locating the shipping and receiving facility so that it is not visible from the road; and (8) reducing the number of employee housing units and bedrooms. Alternatives that should be considered include: (1) re-locating the shipping and receiving facility to the main Village development or outside Olympic Valley and (2) re-locating the day-skier parking to the main Village area or outside Olympic Valley.

### **Traffic**

The impact on traffic from the proposed development of the East Parcel will be significant. The portion of Squaw Valley Road servicing the East Parcel is the busiest stretch of the road. Traffic on this section tends to speed when the road is not jammed, and the road is wide with poorly delineated lanes. Snow removal and storage in the winter is also a problem along this stretch of the road. The addition of hundreds of new residents, 1,000 parking places, and a shipping and receiving facility risks creating traffic chaos on winter weekends and at other high-use times. In addition, the proposed main entrance to the East Parcel development

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appears to be located directly across the street from the main entrance to Tavern Inn. Even at relatively low-traffic times, ingress and egress from Tavern Inn can be difficult, and the proposed East Parcel development will only compound this problem. Mitigation measures that should be considered in the Draft EIR include: (1) designing ingress and egress for the East Parcel that minimizes impacts on traffic flows along Squaw Valley Road and does not interfere with ingress and egress for Tavern Inn; (2) re-locating the ingress and egress to the East Parcel and the shipping and receiving facility so that it is not across the road from Tavern Inn; (3) prohibiting trucks waiting to enter the shipping and receiving facility from parking or stopping along Squaw Valley Road; (4) limiting the operation of the shipping and receiving facility to Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; (5) adding increased enforcement of traffic laws along this portion of Squaw Valley Road; (6) decrease the number of available parking spots at the East Parcel; and (7) require that space be provided within the development for storage of snow removed from Squaw Valley Road. Alternatives that should be considered include: (1) re-locating the shipping and receiving facility either to the main Village development or outside Olympic Valley and (2) re-locating the day-skier parking to the main Village area or outside Olympic Valley.

#### **Noise**

The impact on noise from the proposed East Parcel development will be significant. The proposal anticipates the addition of hundreds of new residents, a large parking structure, and a shipping and receiving facility, with all of the associated activities and related noises. In addition, there will be significant noise associated with construction activities. Scaling back the development by (1) re-locating the shipping and receiving facility either to the main Village development or outside Olympic Valley and (2) re-locating the day-skier parking to the main Village area or outside Olympic Valley would alleviate a significant amount of the potential noise impacts. If these facilities are re-located, then the employee housing component could be re-designed in a manner that would lead to less noise. Other measures to be considered include: (1) designing ingress and egress for the East Parcel that minimizes impacts on traffic flows along Squaw Valley Road and reduces traffic related noise; (2) prohibiting trucks waiting to enter the shipping and receiving facility from parking or stopping along Squaw Valley Road; (3) limiting the operation of the shipping and receiving facility to Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; (4) reducing the number of employee housing units and bedrooms; (5) adopting measures that ensure construction noise does not exceed levels set by the County Code and restricting construction activity to Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and (6) installing sound walls.

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### **Air Quality**

Air quality impacts associated with increased traffic and construction at the East Parcel will be significant. The residents of Tavern Inn already suffer from poor air quality on high-traffic days when cars back up in the morning waiting for traffic to merge at the junction with the road from Squaw Creek Resort and in the afternoon when traffic waits for the light at Route 89 to change. The proposed development—particularly the parking and shipping and receiving facility—will add to the existing problem. In addition, there will be significant air quality issues during the construction phase. Scaling back the development by (1) re-locating the shipping and receiving facility to the main Village development or outside Olympic Valley and (2) re-locating the day-skier parking to the main Village or outside Olympic Valley would avoid adding to what is already a poor air quality situation at the east end of the valley. Mitigation measures to be considered should include: (1) designing ingress and egress for the East Parcel that minimizes impacts on traffic flows along Squaw Valley Road so that traffic does not come to a complete stop; (2) prohibiting trucks waiting to enter the shipping and receiving facility from stopping or parking along Squaw Valley Road with their engines running; (3) limiting the operation of the shipping and receiving facility to Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; (4) prohibiting vehicles waiting in the shipping and receiving area from idling; (5) using only zero-emission buses or vehicles to ferry guests and employees between the East Parcel and main Village; (6) require the use of only zero-emission vehicles to ferry goods from the shipping and receiving facility to the Village; and (6) require monitoring of air quality on high-traffic days and closing the parking facility on days when the air quality situation is poor.

### **Forest and Biological Resources**

The Revised NOP notes the presence of approximately 350 trees on the East Parcel. The impact of the proposed development on these trees must be evaluated and mitigation measures should be considered that would eliminate the need to remove any of these trees. In addition, impacts the East Parcel development will have on the biology of Squaw Creek, which abuts the north side of the parcel, must be evaluated and mitigation measures to eliminate adverse impacts must be assessed. Squaw Creek has suffered over the years from the development that has occurred in Olympic Valley—for example, the trout population has been reduced. The development of the East Parcel should not add to the creek's problems. Indeed, mitigation measures should be proposed that would improve biological habitats along this portion of the creek. In addition, impacts from the development on other wildlife and plant species must be evaluated. Finally, impacts on biological resources associated with locating propane storage tanks on the East Parcel must be fully assessed and appropriate mitigation measure evaluated. This includes impacts associated with installing and maintaining the pipes and other plumbing needed to deliver the propane from the East Parcel to the end-users in the Village. Locating the

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propane storage at the Village rather than the East Parcel should be considered as an alternative because it would eliminate all impacts on biological resources associated with installing and maintaining the pipes and plumbing needed to connect the two locations.

#### **Hazardous Materials and Hazards**

The impact on the health and safety of nearby residents associated with locating the propane storage for the Village at the East Parcel must be evaluated and mitigation measures assessed. Discussion of propane storage was not included in the revised Specific Plan; however, at a public meeting on January 18, 2014, the project applicant announced it was their plan to locate propane storage at the East Parcel. The Draft EIR must evaluate all impacts associated with the proposal to locate propane storage on the East Parcel, including impacts associated with installing and maintaining the infrastructure needed to transfer the gas from the East Parcel to the Village. The geology of the site must also be evaluated to determine if it is a suitable location for propane storage.

#### **Public Services and Utilities**

The adequacy of the available water supply has already been identified as an issue associated with the proposed project. Locating employee housing consisting of up to 264 bedrooms at the East Parcel rather than outside Olympic Valley will add significantly to the impact on water supply. This impact and appropriate mitigation measures and alternatives must be assessed in the Draft EIR.

#### **Water Quality**

The impact that development of the East Parcel will have on water quality must be evaluated in the Draft EIR. Of particular concern are impacts from sediment and pollutants discharged into Squaw Creek during the construction phase, as well as from the development itself. In addition, impacts on water quality associated with locating the propane storage on the East Parcel, including the plumping system that will connect it to the Village, must be evaluated. This includes impacts on Squaw Creek and wetlands at the East Parcel and along the entire route of the pipeline connecting the East Parcel with the Village. These impacts could be greatly reduced or eliminated if the propane storage was located at the Village rather than the East Parcel, and this alternative should be evaluated in the Draft EIR.

#### **Cultural Resources**

The Revised NOP notes that "at least one recorded prehistoric site exists within the vicinity of the East Parcel." The development of the East Parcel on this and other potential archaeological sites must be evaluated in the Draft EIR and appropriate mitigation measures assessed.

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### **Greenhouse Gases**

The East Parcel development combined with the expansion of the Village could lead to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The impact on greenhouse gas emissions must be evaluated and mitigation measures assessed.

### **Geology**

The geology of the East Parcel must be evaluated to determine if it is a suitable and safe location for the proposed development.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

As noted in the preliminary statement, the proposed development for the East Parcel appears inconsistent with surrounding uses, which are primarily residential. While the public services facility and Squaw Valley Academy are located in this area, they do not fundamentally change the residential character of the neighborhood. However, the cumulative effect of adding the proposed East Parcel development would certainly result in a fundamental change in the character of the neighborhood. It would change the neighborhood from mountain residential to urban and commercial. This cumulative impact must be assessed and mitigation measures and alternatives must be considered in the Draft EIR including: (1) scaling back the size the East Parcel development and (2) re-locating portions of the development such as the day-skier parking and shipping and receiving facility either to the Village or outside of Olympic Valley.

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The Tavern Inn Board appreciates the County's consideration of this letter in the process of developing the Draft EIR. We are available to answer any questions the County may have regarding this letter or our concerns.

Very truly yours,



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