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Lawsuit Filed to Halt Massive Overbuilding at Lake Tahoe.

Conservation and Community groups acted today to take up unsettled issues over the newly approved Homewood Mountain Resort project to the US District of Eastern California.

Homewood Resort is a fading ski area that is in dire need of renovation. The two groups that filed, Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore, worked for a renovation and upgrade that would fit with the community and protect the lake. But the final project was approved on December 14th by the TRPA Governing Board. It is a wall-to-wall mass of buildings that climb 77 feet up the face of the Homewood ski slope.

The project clearly violates numerous environmental and community development standards. But the agencies ignored and or changed the rules to accommodate those issues. The agencies catered to the wants of the project at every turn.

Members of the groups and Tahoe conservation community met with the proponents, developers and the agencies for more than two years to resolve issues of concern. Few issues were resolved: Not traffic congestion, not the tsunami of condos and hotel rooms, and not air and water impacts, scenic impacts or noise impacts.

The groups proposed a smaller project. That was rejected.

“We want a revitalized Homewood Ski Area, but the current project is simply too large,” says Mason Overstreet, Conservation Director of Friends of the West Shore. “A smaller resort in scale with the surrounding community would still bring in hundreds of jobs for residents and millions of dollars in revenue to the local area.”

The agencies even failed to put conditions on the project for effective monitoring standards that would assure that the worst of the project impacts could be corrected later.

“We had no choice. We met with them to no avail. It was protect the lake and the basin and the community or stand by and watch the damage erupt,” said Laurel Ames, Conservation Co-Chair of the Tahoe Area Sierra Club.

Lake Tahoe is a national treasure that must be protected for future generations. The Tahoe Area Sierra Club and the Friends of the West Shore regret that legal action is the only alternative now.

Earthjustice filed today’s lawsuit against TRPA and the Homewood developers in the US District Court of Eastern California. Placer County is also named in the suit for violating the California Environmental Quality Act. Earthjustice attorneys are representing both groups.