



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JOHN GARAMENDI

October 10, 2008

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
PO Box 5310
Stateline, Nevada 89449

Dear Chairwoman Bresnick and TRPA Board Members:

I am writing to you to express my serious concern over the misuse of Tourist Accommodation Units (TAUs) at Lake Tahoe and the threat it poses to the Lake's future. The TRPA definition of a TAU is a "one bedroom or a group of two or more rooms with a bedroom...primarily designed to be rented by the day or week and occupied on a temporary basis." This definition was originally intended to apply to modest structures such as 300 sq. ft. one bedroom units. In practice, this definition is now being distorted to allow for the construction of large, multi-bedroom timeshare units as large as 3,000 sq. ft.

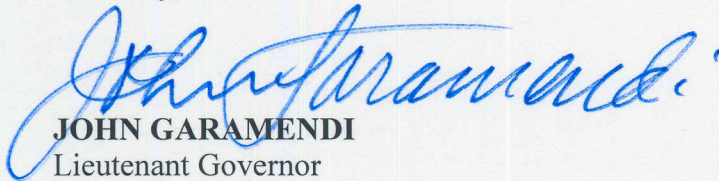
The transfer and expansion of TAUs that is currently taking place blatantly ignores both the spirit and intent of the rules and definitions of TAUs. Allowing these new large subdivision structures increases population and traffic and reduces air quality in and around the Lake. Such significant pressure on Lake Tahoe's fragile ecosystem undermines our ability to attain environmental thresholds we have worked so hard for decades to achieve.

I know TRPA management would prefer to defer the TAU issue until the adoption of the new Tahoe Regional Plan. This option is not viable since these massive projects continue to be approved in the interim while the timeline for adopting the Regional Plan continues to be delayed. Furthermore, as you are aware, a tolling agreement on the Sandy Beach project in Tahoe Vista expires on October 15, 2008. Misuse of TAUs is one of the major issues addressed in the tolling agreement. It is my understanding that if the appeal to the Placer County Board by the Friends of Tahoe Vista and other environmental groups is unsuccessful on October 20th, then litigation will quickly follow.

There is no need to engage in timely and costly lawsuits that will do nothing to further our common goal of the sustainable preservation of Lake Tahoe. Before any additional projects are permitted, you and other regulatory agencies in the Lake Tahoe region have the authority to avoid such litigation by enforcing the clear intent of the TAU definition in plan reviews and approvals.

Lake Tahoe is one of California's and our nation's most precious natural treasures. Restoration and sustainable preservation of the Lake is a goal we all share. In the 11 years since the 1997 Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program was initiated with President Clinton's Summit, we have seen more than \$1.1 billion and the collaborative effort of state, federal and local partners in both California and Nevada achieve notable progress toward this common goal. As someone who has worked to preserve Lake Tahoe's environment for more than 30 years, both at the state and federal level, I strongly encourage you to address this issue immediately and keep us moving in the right direction.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Lieutenant Governor