



North Tahoe Fire Protection District
P.O. Box 5879
Tahoe City, CA 96145

December 30, 2016

Dear Chief Schwartz,

We are writing on behalf of the Friends of the West Shore (FOWS) regarding the 12/14/2016 North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD) Board meeting discussion of the Homewood Wildfire Evacuation Plan (Evacuation Plan), which appears to be considered the “one public meeting” Homewood Mountain Resort (HMR)¹ is responsible for under the Settlement Agreement with the California Clean Energy Committee (CCEC).² FOWS is supported by over 500 West Shore property owners, residents, visitors, and others who care about the West Shore and want to protect our environment and quality of life. Notably, our members and supporters will be subject to the Evacuation Plan and directly impacted by how future threats from wildfire are handled. FOWS works extensively to ensure the public is involved in plans and project decisions that affect our area such as the Evacuation Plan; in fact, we include regular updates pertaining to the HMR project in our bi-monthly newsletters, as well as on our website.³ FOWS is concerned that insufficient efforts were taken to make the public aware of this extremely important meeting on a topic of key interest to the West Shore. Further, little effort appears to have been taken to notify the public of the report itself as well.

We were informed after the meeting occurred by a member of the public who happened to see a small legal notice buried in the local paper that the Evacuation Plan had been included on the 12/14/2016 NTFPD Board meeting agenda. We shared this information with the CCEC representative and learned that the CCEC had also not been notified of the meeting in advance; as such notification was required, FOWS anticipated to be notified of the meeting by the CCEC, at a minimum, so we could inform our members and supporters.

As HMR and Placer County are well aware, FOWS members and supporters have a specific interest in the Homewood Village Resort project. We have been advising our members that there would be a public meeting regarding the Evacuation Plan since it was first announced as part of the agreement with the CCEC last fall. Given the importance of this plan to the health and safety of the public, we also expected that extensive efforts would be made to inform the public and to encourage participation at the public hearing. Such efforts should include advertising through local media outlets (through more than small legal notices), posting on events pages (including NTFPD’s and Homewood Mountain Resort website and Facebook pages), contacting organizations such as FOWS to help notify our members and supporters, as well as mailing notices to West Shore residents and property owners. We monitored all online outlets in early December, and then reviewed them again when we learned of this meeting, and found no

¹ Although JMA Ventures, LLC owns and operates the Homewood Village Resort, the Settlement Agreement with the CCEC identifies the responsible party as Homewood Mountain Resort.

² http://www.californiacleanenergy.org/homewood_wildfire_evacuation_report

³ www.friendswestshore.org

notifications or advertisements.⁴ Publication of a legal notice represents the *bare minimum* notification for a public plan or meeting; West Shore residents, homeowners, and visitors have a direct interest in the Evacuation Plan and HMR and Placer County have a responsibility to notify and engage the public on this matter. In fact, it was reported that NTFPD representatives also questioned the scarce attendance by the public.

The participation of the public at this meeting takes on even more importance considering the fire that occurred at, and destroyed, the South Lodge of Homewood Mountain Resort this past week.

We therefore request that a new meeting be scheduled, and that the CCEC, FOWS, other organizations, media outlets, and other entities representing the West Shore be notified well in advance so we can provide a timely invitation to members of the public who will be directly impacted by the Evacuation Plan. Efforts must be made to consult with the public, especially as it is the public who will be expected to follow the Evacuation Plan.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. In addition, please provide us with any future notifications related to this matter at susan@friendswestshore.org and jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net.

Sincerely,



Susan Gearhart,
President



Jennifer Quashnick,
Conservation Consultant

Cc: Eugene Wilson, California Clean Energy Committee
Todd Chapman, JMA Ventures, LLC
Allen Breuch, Placer County

⁴ We located the agendized item on the NTFPD website's Board page after the meeting occurred; no notice was provided anywhere else on the website, including the main page or News page.