



North Tahoe Fire Protection District
Attn: Beth Kenna
P.O. Box 5879
Tahoe City, CA 96145

February 15, 2017

Dear Ms. Kenna,

FOWS would like to thank North Tahoe Fire Protection District (NTFPD) staff for discussing the Homewood Evacuation and Life Safety Report (Evacuation Report) during the February 8th meeting with the California Clean Energy Committee (CCEC) and others. As stated during the meeting, FOWS has several questions and concerns that we would like to discuss further with you so that we may assist our members and supporters, as well as NTFPD's efforts and resource needs, in order to address emergency situations along the West Shore. FOWS also hopes to work with the NTFPD to help educate the public on the Evacuation Plan and ongoing efforts.

FOWS understands that all fire protection and building design codes will be met by the project, including defensible space. In addition, FOWS supports Homewood Village Resort (HVR) efforts to continue forest thinning throughout the resort area to reduce fire danger and improve forest health.

That said, FOWS remains concerned with how the shelter-in-place concept will be successfully implemented. We understand that State Route (SR) 89 may not provide a successful evacuation route under *existing* peak traffic conditions (and/or if access is blocked for any other reason). The addition of HVR traffic increases summertime vehicle trips. FOWS supports the NTFPD's efforts to lay out a plan of non-exacerbation by HVR.

The shelter-in-place is a solution that will take substantial effort and adequate staff to successfully implement. In the event of a fast-advancing wildfire or other urgent emergency, it is likely that the public will be panicked, and it is human instinct to flee the area. The Evacuation Plan relies on HVR successfully directing guests and adjacent residents or visitors to specified shelter-in-place locations and/or to remain in their rooms, rather than to get into vehicles and attempt to flee the area, which would only further exacerbate vehicle congestion and prevent emergency access on SR 89. We are concerned whether HVR staff can be adequately trained to deal with such situations. In addition, if only limited time is available before evacuation and/or the shelter-in-place is needed, such as with a fast-moving wildfire, we are concerned with the ability of HVR staff to ensure guests do not rush to their cars to leave the scene, thereby adding to congestion on SR 89. We have the following questions we wish to discuss with you further.

Shelter-in-Place - Implementation:

- Who would be available on-site/immediately to help handle evacuation/shelter issues?
- Would the shelter-in-place concept include all residents/visitors along the West Shore, or just people in Homewood? Would they be directed to the HVR site or elsewhere? Would there be a coordination plan with the Meeks Bay Fire Station in El Dorado County?

- How would the NTFPD and HVR staff coordinate with the California Highway Patrol and Placer County Sheriff's office to regulate traffic in both directions on SR 89 to provide for emergency access? What impacts would congested conditions have on emergency response times?
- How does the shelter-in-place concept address dangers from smoke inhalation during a wildfire emergency? During the Feb. 8th meeting, NTFPD staff indicated that guests would likely be directed to stay in buildings while non-guests would be directed to parking areas/conference rooms. We are concerned about air quality at both internal and external locations. For example, would smoke masks be available? Would buildings have designated 'air-tight' areas? Can the NTFPD require a special safety placard in rooms with specific fire behavior requirements, such as not opening windows?
- What alternative measures will be employed in the event the wildfire is too close or immediately threatening the shelter-in-place locations, and if so, what would those be?

Shelter-in-Place – Examples and mock emergency drills:

- Are there other places shelter-in-place has been shown to function specifically in a wildfire situation, and what did or did not work? We would like to provide examples to our members.
- We recommend mock emergency drills be conducted on a regular basis as part of the Evacuation Plan.

Employee Training:

- NTFPD indicated that HVR employees will be required to be trained how to address these situations, and the HVR's HOA may be responsible for ensuring this is done.
 - o How often would training sessions be held? Given the influx of seasonal/part-time positions, once a year does not seem adequate.
 - o What qualifications will be required of employees to ensure they have the skills necessary to manage panicked guests in emergency situations?
 - o How would NTFPD ensure a sufficient number of HVR employees are adequately trained for handling emergency situations at any given time?

Enforcement:

- The Evacuation Plan includes the potential denial of occupancy permits as one way to regulate compliance.
 - o How often would occupancy permits be up for renewal (in other words, at what time interval/how regularly can NTFPD have an impact/leverage to enforce)?
 - o How would NTFPD monitor HVR to ensure the Evacuation Plan requirements are met? How often? Would additional staff time and resources be provided by HVR (beyond that required by the FEIR/S and final permit, since the Evacuation Plan requires more than what was included in the original 2011 FEIR/S documents)?
 - o Would mitigation fees and other costs to HVR be adjusted over time, as needed, to support ongoing adequate NTFPD and emergency services?

On-lake options:

- Is water evacuation on Lake Tahoe a possibility?
- Does the plan include a water boat that can spray water up on to the land? If so, how far/what are the specifications (e.g. how far upland can it be effective)?

FOWS outreach and public education:

- How can FOWS assist NTFPD in obtaining the necessary resources as outlined in the Evacuation Plan?
- How can FOWS assist in the future as the Evacuation Plan is updated?
- As stated, FOWS would like to work with NTFPD to co-host/facilitate a public meeting this spring/early summer so the public can better understand the Evacuation Plan, ask questions, and show support for NTFPD's resource needs.

FOWS believes the Evacuation Report provides an important opportunity to improve the safety of residents, visitors, and HVR guests on the West Shore. In addition, we believe the Evacuation Report should be used as the baseline for the type of emergency planning that could be required of future project applicants, including new large development and redevelopment projects that will increase the human and vehicle population in the Basin.

We appreciate this opportunity to improve our understanding of how the Evacuation Plan will be implemented and to understand NTFPD's needs so that we may encourage HVR, Placer County, and other entities and developers to ensure NTFPD has adequate resources to protect public health and safety. As mentioned during our meeting, FOWS is very interested in co-hosting/facilitating a public meeting later this spring or summer to focus on the Evacuation Plan with the public and address questions and concerns; as noted in our 12/30/2016 letter, many FOWS members and supporters were unaware of the item's inclusion on the 12/14/2016 NTFPD agenda, and like FOWS, desire an additional public meeting.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at susan@friendswestshore.org and jqtahoe@sbcglobal.net. We look forward to speaking with you again.

Sincerely,


Susan Gearhart,
President


Jennifer Quashnick,
Conservation Consultant

Cc: Eugene Wilson, California Clean Energy Committee
Ellie Waller, Friends of Tahoe Vista