

January 25, 2019

Dear Mr. Pangman, Sierra County Planning Commission, and the Sierra County Supervisors,

I have read the entire report on the Sierra Hot Springs resort development. In my initial letter of concern, that was emailed to your office on July 1, 2015, many of my concerns were not addressed in the plan that was made available as of November 2018. Here are my concerns from 2015 for reference:

1. Public parking in Sierraville: where would this be to support visitors? Sierraville already has parking issues.
2. Public restrooms in Sierraville: Sierraville has no public restrooms such as Sierra City or Loyalton.
3. Campsites: There are already campsites near Sierraville. Cottonwood and Cold Creek. They do not get much use, so maybe the hot springs can work on getting their visitors to use those already existing campgrounds. This would be less impact on the environment and visually for the valley. (Maybe reduce the amount of spaces on site to 10?)
4. Employee Housing: Reducing the amount of housing could create rental income for existing homes in Loyalton, Calpine, and Sierraville.
5. The lodge: While the proposal has the lodge situated in the trees, it will have a visual impact to the valley.
6. Traffic: with the potential of 322 (now 800) visitors on a daily basis, this will impact our roads and noise in the valley.
7. Emergency services: Who will support the hot springs for emergency services?

In reading the current report, a resort of this size will have serious impacts on the Sierraville community and outlying areas. I would like the commission to take in to consideration a statement that is in the Sierra County General plan:

“It is the County’s most fundamental goal to maintain its culture, heritage and rural character, and preserve its rural quality of life.”

In no way is the current plan for the Sierra Hot Springs in accordance with this goal.

In this letter, I will be specific in my concerns. I have included table headings, and page numbers for reference to the report:

Table 1 Aesthetics: Section 1.1A: Fruit trees are not an option for the campground area. Fruit trees attract native bears. Bears and tourists do not mix together. This poses potential problems with wildlife and humans.

Table 1: Section 1.1B: Is there a campground host to oversee the 150 or so campers? What are the rules? How do we know the campers will not walk on to private property and ranches?

Table 1: Section 1.1C: The campground will have a visual impact to our community. At the current proposed location, it will be seen from the road. It is also placed very closely to wetland environments, which could be destroyed with human use.

Table 1: Section 1.3: Lighting should not be available in the campground at all. There should not be any night lights visible to anyone in Sierraville. (Most campgrounds in our area do not have any lighting, hence the true spirit of camping.)

Table 1: Mitigation Measures; Air Quality: Section 3.1 C: At the proposed plan, the lodge and the 40 homes, plus the cabins, will have wood burning appliances. This will double the amount of emissions in our community of Sierraville. We experience weather inversions in our town. The smoke will create smog, similar to what is seen in Truckee and Reno during inversions.

Table 1: 4.3. Biological Resources: Rare plant surveys should be conducted before this plan is approved. Has a qualified biologist looked for a rare species in the Sierra Nevada called a “Fen”?

Table 1: 4.6 Biological Resources: A qualified biologist should be doing a study of the movement of wildlife before this plan is approved. This would determine where to put drainage, guest cabins, and the pool complex. We need to protect our native Loyalton deer herd that currently migrates through that area.

Table 1: Geology and Soils: 6:1C: The state and federal government should be notified before this plan is approved for wastewater systems.

Table 1: Geology and Soils: 6:1i: The state of California should be approving the new wells before this plan is approved. This plan should not take any water away from already existing wells that provide the citizens of Sierraville and the agricultural wells already in existence.

Table 1: Hazards: 8.1: Cal Fire should have a very clear plan of tank size and amount of water that will need to be used to serve interior sprinklers, and fire suppression. This could put parameters on the amount of wells drilled.

Table 1: Transportation and Circulation: Section 16.1b. The county should not be responsible for maintaining a road that is used by a private resort. When it says the “County”, this really means the current tax payers in Sierra County.

In addition, here are my comments regarding the narrative on specific pages:

Page 30: Paving and parking area for 220 vehicles. This should include areas for snow removal and snow storage, which are not mentioned in this plan. This could impact the amount of area of soil disturbance, and the acreage for parking.

Page 30: Primary evacuation route: Only one road. There should be 2 roads available for a wildfire. (Camp fire, 2018. 89 people died as there was only one way out of the town.) This poses a threat to human life for the resort goers, as well as the community members in Sierraville.

Pages 31-32: I do not agree with any of these numbers of use in the current document. The current document needs to include visitors from the Globe Hotel, and the Calpine Lodge, which are all owned by the Sierra Hot Springs resort. This would generate a larger number of current usage.

Page 36: The project will be seen and have a large impact on a scenic vista. The project will create a new source of substantial light or glare with windows and night time lighting. (Consider what Northstar and Squaw Creek Resort look like at night.)

Page 46: Who is responsible for the water in controlling the dust? Will the resort, or will the water be taken from the community of Sierraville?

Page 53-54: The Willow Flycatcher and the Townsend's big eared bat are species of concern. Both of these species are known to exist in the forests of Sierraville. There is a mention of raptors not being seen during the site survey. Bald Eagles are often seen by local community members flying near the Sierra Hot Springs. This is an impact to these species.

Page 56: Who receives the "compensation for impacts that cannot be avoided"?

Page 59: Under setting. 12 sites are identified within the project as having inconsistent reports. Due to the nature of historic significance, this should be looked at again in a further study.

Page 70: Was the flood of 2017 considered in mapping out the areas for the wastewater treatment system? For at least 3 days, the area was flooded with feet of water. This would impact water sources downstream of the treatment system. The Feather River Watershed could be compromised when the leach fields from the resort do not work.

Page 74: Hazards and Hazardous Materials: 8 G and 8 H. Both of these are a significant impact to the Sierraville community. The more people that need to evacuate, the more danger it is to the community. The zone of the Sierra Hot Springs development is with the "Very High Hazard Severity Zones" according to Cal Fire. This project puts in jeopardy the safety of all citizens and visitors to the Sierraville area. (Please consider the Camp Fire issues that happened during evacuation of that fire in 2018.)

Page 75: Air traffic will be increased with this project. People like to fly in to hot springs.

Page 77: The tank size for domestic use and fire flow requirements seems undersized. If more tanks are needed, then more ground is disturbed in excavation.

Page 78: In a recent fire on September 8, 2018 near the Dearwater Airport, the Hot Springs Staff seemed untrained and unsure of an evacuation plan for the current resort development. People were not evacuated off the property in a timely manner, and seemed to impede the fire resources that were used on that day. I personally observed the fire, and the "evacuation" of the resort users. It was chaotic, and no plan seemed to be in place.

Page 81: "No formal groundwater evaluation was conducted to evaluate groundwater availability within the project area". An evaluation needs to be complete before this plan is approved. This

could directly impact our current ranches in the area. The state of California needs to be involved in a groundwater study.

Page 86: Noise levels. The noise from the construction, traffic, air traffic, would be significant to the community of Sierraville. And over 20 years, this would be ongoing.

Page 87: The County needs to complete a noise study before this plan is approved. Again, over 20 years the community of Sierraville will be impacted.

Page 89: Population and housing: This project would be a significant impact on the population growth and extension of other infrastructures in Sierraville. With 40 homes being proposed, and the likelihood of 4 people in each home, that is 160 new people. Currently, this study is saying Sierraville has a population of 200 people. This would double the town's population.

Page 90: Public services. This project would significantly impact the community of Sierraville with fire protection response time, police protection response time, and a drain on our current parking in downtown Sierraville. Where are the cattle trucks going to park? Where are the ranch vehicles going to park? Where are the public restrooms?

Page 92: Recreation use on National Forest lands would increase in the area, as well as unsupervised camping in the forest with illegal fire rings. This would cause fire concerns, garbage issues, and illegal campsites in the forests surrounding Sierraville.

Page 93: Traffic volume count was conducted on Saturday, September 12, 2015. The Harbin Hot Springs burned down on September 14, 2015. A current traffic study should have been conducted, as many people came to the Sierra Hot Springs after Harbin burned down. Most people in town have seen a significant change in the traffic out at Lemmon Canyon Road, and highway 89.

Page 98: "Buildout of the Masterplan is expected to generate 1, 140 vehicle trips, which is an increase of the 800 trips over the existing condition". This alone shows the impact this resort will have on our roads, services, and public areas in our community.

Page 101: In no way should the county of Sierra enter in to a cost sharing agreement for the road. This means that the citizens/tax payers of Sierra County are helping to pay the costs for a private resort in our community.

Page 104: "An analysis of anticipated trip generation should be conducted prior to approval of any proposed component of the Masterplan." This should be done before the plan is approved.

Page 109: "No test wells have been developed and no groundwater evaluation has been completed". This needs to be done before this plan is approved.

Page 111: Mandatory Findings of Significance: In all areas of A, B, and C, these are significant impacts to the area that need to be addressed before this plan is approved. An Environmental Impact report needs to be in place before this plan is approved.

Under CEQA, **“Environmental impact reports (EIRs) shall be used to provide full public disclosure of the environmental impacts of a proposed project.”** In no way does this current report satisfy this statement. There are too many variables, and inconclusive documentation in this current report.

I hope that Sierra County will not approve the current project as standing. I would like an Environmental Impact Report, and I request the county to work with the citizens and tax payers that are currently living in Sierraville to ensure their quality of life and most importantly, their safety. Our nation saw the aftermath of the Camp Fire, a devastating loss of life and homes. In many reports after the fire, the loss of life could have been prevented with better planning with the city and county. 89 people died in that fire. We do not want that to happen to the community of Sierraville.

Sincerely,

Janice Eggers

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