Groups sue over Tejon development
Bakersfield Californian, Friday, Nov. 13, 2009

A group of environmentalists, Native Americans and local residents filed an expected lawsuit Thursday to overturn the county’s approval of Tejon Mountain Village, an upscale project of homes, golf courses and hotel rooms.

The lawsuit stemmed from concern about the California condor, Chumash sites, air quality concerns and other “decreased quality of life for current residents,” according to a news release.

"All of California will suffer if this project gets built -- more water will be stolen, the bird that graces our quarter will be doomed, our air will get dirtier, and thousands of people will be placed in harm's way because of earthquakes and wildfires that will inevitably follow -- all so Wall Street can make another quick buck," Adam Keats, director of the Urban Wildlands Program at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in the release.

The suit was filed in Kern County Superior Court by the Center for Biological Diversity, Wishtoyo Foundation, TriCounty Watchdogs and the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment.

The Kern County Board of Supervisors approved plans and environmental reports for the project Oct. 5. That project involves 5,082 acres of homes, hotels, golf courses and shops on more than 26,417 acres east of Interstate 5 near Frazier Park.

Officials at Tejon Mountain Village LLC said they just received the lawsuit and so can't comment on specifics but were disappointed it was filed.

They pointed out Tejon had hammered out a "historic" conservation agreement with environmental groups to preserve up to 90 percent of the sprawling Tejon Ranch.

"The county planning staff and the supervisors were unanimously satisfied that our plan for Tejon Mountain Village has set new standards for conservation and sustainable development," David Crowder, director of government and community relations for Tejon Mountain Village, said in a statement. "We feel that the record will show that the county made a well-seasoned decision and that the courts will find in our favor."

Environmentalists sue over huge Calif. development
By Jacob Adelman, Associated Press Writer
In the S.F. Chronicle, Merced Sun-Star and other papers, Friday, November 13, 2009

LOS ANGELES (AP) --A coalition of environmentalists filed a lawsuit Thursday to stop the development of a 5,000-acre resort community on the sprawling Tejon Ranch property some 60 miles north of Los Angeles.

The lawsuit filed in Kern County Superior Court argues that county officials ignored its potential impact on the endangered California condor while discounting flaws in the project's water-use plan and air pollution problems from increased traffic in the now undeveloped area.

"All of California will suffer if this project gets built — more water will be stolen, the bird that graces our quarter will be doomed, our air will get dirtier," said Adam Keats, a director at the Center for Biological Diversity, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit.

Kern County supervisors last month unanimously approved the Tejon Mountain Village project, which includes 3,500 homes, two golf courses and resort hotels in the Tehachapi Mountains. The rustic area is along heavily traveled Interstate 5 between metropolitan Los Angeles and the southern San Joaquin Valley.

The project is the smaller of two developments planned for the Tejon Ranch Co.’s 270,000-acre property, the largest piece of privately held land in the state. A separate 23,000-home project known as Centennial is currently undergoing environmental review.

Tejon Mountain Village LLC spokesman David Crowder said county officials were right to approve the project that met high standards for conservation and sustainable development.
"We feel that the record will show that the county made a well-reasoned decision and that the courts will find in our favor," he said.

A phone message left with Kern County spokesman Allan Krauter was not immediately returned.

Other plaintiffs in the lawsuit include the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment and the Wishtoyo Foundation, a Chumash Indian environmental group.

Tejon Ranch made a deal last year with several other environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, to preserve a 240,000-acre, or 375-square-mile, swath of wilderness in exchange for the groups not opposing development on other parts of the ranch.

The Tehachapi Mountains are important habitat for the California condor, a giant species that soars on wings spanning 9 1/2 feet and almost became extinct in the 1980s.

Report: Texas greenhouse gas emissions down
By John McFarland, Associated Press Writer
In the S.F. Chronicle, Merced Sun-Star and other papers, Friday, November 13, 2009

DALLAS (AP) -- While Texas maintains a firm grip on the dubious title of the nation's most prolific industrial polluter, an environmental group's report Thursday found that wind power and other cleaner energy sources have helped cut emissions linked to global warming in the state.

Environment Texas analyzed the most recent U.S. Department of Energy statistics that show the state is still the leader in carbon-dioxide emissions but cut such pollution by 2 percent between 2004 and 2007.

In that same four-year period, emissions around the country went up 0.7 percent and increased in 33 states, according to the report.

"We can drive the economy without driving up pollution," said Environment Texas Director Luke Metzger. "By moving to clean energy, we can cut pollution, help jump-start the economy and create millions of new clean energy jobs around the country."


Finding the balance between the environment and the economy is a constant struggle in Texas. The state relies heavily on the energy industry and has more coal-fired power plants, chemical plants and oil refineries than any other. And with a rapidly growing population, there's always need for more power.

Environment Texas, a citizen-funded environmental advocacy group, says less coal has been burned recently thanks to increased wind power, natural gas use and improved efficiency at power plants. Texas produces more wind power than any other state.

The state is not required to regulate carbon dioxide emissions, which come mostly from coal-fired plants and vehicles, but the climate bill pending in Congress calls for cuts of 20 percent for carbon dioxide polluters by 2020.

The report says Texas has the clean energy capacity to make those larger cuts and urges passage of the measure. The House version narrowly passed in June, and a similar version faces a tough fight in the Senate. Metzger said the report indicated that the 20 percent cuts were feasible and would not harm the economy "as the governor tries to suggest."

Gov. Rick Perry has been an outspoken critic of the climate legislation, saying it will do massive harm to Texas industry, but has been a big proponent of alternative energy.

"Texas is successfully fostering the next generation of energy technology and reducing real pollutants like ozone by using incentives and free markets, not by imposing job-killing regulations and taxes on our businesses," Perry spokesman Chris Cutrone said.

The Texas environmental agency, which also opposes the federal climate legislation, praised the Environment Texas report as proof the state's efforts to cut pollution are working.
"As we have said previously, if done incorrectly, CO2 regulations will impose great costs on Texas, without any guarantee of a measurable environmental benefit," said Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Chairman Bryan W. Shaw. "This report is an example of how Texas' policy of encouraging clean energy and new technologies result in reductions in pollution and other emissions, without heavy-handed regulations."

The other two TCEQ commissioners, who are appointed by Perry, also praised the report.

"These programs have resulted in cleaner air and reduced emissions of all kinds, without new regulations from Washington that are based on questionable science," commissioner Buddy Garcia said.

Texas' per capita emissions from electric generators fell by 4 percent from 2004-2007, the report said. Texas got 2.5 percent of its power from cleaner energy sources in 2007 and that figure has more doubled in the two years since, Metzger said.

After Texas, the biggest carbon dioxide polluters are California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Louisiana and Georgia.

Letter to the Merced Sun-Star, Friday, November 13, 2009:
Letter: Blocking growth
Editor: The so-called Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth seems to really be about stopping any growth.

I seem to remember a similar kind of opposition to UC Merced based on a deep concern for the fairy shrimp. I wish they would just get over it and let Merced move into the 21st century.

The Wal-Mart distribution center will be a great asset because of the many jobs it will provide. It is to be located on land zoned for just such a purpose.

The air quality concerns that the opponents keep harping about are bogus -- prevailing winds are from the northwest, blowing any pollution away from town. Besides, the trucks that will come and go from the center will drive through town whether it is there or not.

It is too bad that California's current environmental laws allow a few malcontents to slow down or attempt to block an important project. I hope that Judge John Kiriwara will dismiss this frivolous lawsuit.

Michael Rench, Merced

Letter to the Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Friday, November 13, 2009:
Healthy air

Part of reforming health care is preventing illnesses. One cause of illness is pollution caused by coal and other fossil fuels. Therefore, if we want to address our health care crisis, one thing we have to address is pollution.

Michael Karsh, Martinez

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Colorado obtains federal help to export clean technology to China and Mexico. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

Colorado obtiene ayuda federal para exportar tecnología limpia
La Opinión, Friday, November 13, 2009

DENVER (AP).- El estado de Colorado recibirá un fondo federal para promover la exportación de tecnología no contaminante a China y México.

El director de desarrollo económico de la entidad Don Marostica y el director regional del Departamento Federal de Comercio James Kennedy tenían previsto anunciar la entrega de ayuda el jueves.

La Oficina Estatal de Desarrollo Económico y Comercio Internacional es una de los cinco beneficiarios del Programa de Desarrollo de Mercado para Colaboradores. El estado recibirá fondos iguales en los
próximos tres años para ayudar a exportar tecnologías de bajo impacto en el ambiente y servicios para las empresas de Colorado a China y México.