

Presentation to El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
January 12, 2010

Radon Update

1. Two thirds of the homes in Douglas County cities of Stateline and Zephyr Cove (just across the state border from El Dorado County) have elevated radon, according to a recent article in the Gardnerville Record Courier January 4, 2010
<http://www.recordcourier.com/article/20100104/NEWS/100109980/1062&ParentProfile=1049>
2. The California Geological Survey's Special Report 211: Radon Potential in the Lake Tahoe Area, California was released in March, 2009. It showed over 10,000 homes and over 25,000 people living in "very high" radon potential areas. That's about 75% of all houses and people in the El Dorado County portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin. If you include the next category down, the "high radon potential" category, it's around 90% of all people and houses. That's just about everybody. See attached chart and map.
3. Compare these statistics to highest radon state, Iowa, with 71% of homes with elevated radon. According to the Iowa Radon web page: "The Iowa Radon Survey has indicated that Iowa has the largest percentage (or 71.6%) of homes above the US Environmental Protection Agency action level of 4pCi/L, which is more than any other state in the US."

So just for perspective, little South Lake Tahoe and surrounding areas of El Dorado County in the Tahoe Basin rank above even the highest radon state in the nation.

4. What has Environmental Management, the agency tasked with alerting us and protecting us from dangers in the natural environment, accomplished in the last 5 years?
 - In February, 2005 radon was left off the Community Update on environmental threats, in fact radon was not even listed on the EMD web site We had known radon was a threat in the Sierra Nevada from a state-wide radon survey performed by the Department of Public Health in 1991 which stated that the Sierra Nevada region was the highest in the state with 11 to 45% of houses having elevated radon. However no one in the County was aware of that report.
 - In March, 2006, a year later and after much nagging, that EMD agreed to distribute to the building department the free EPA booklet for builders on how to build radon out during new home construction. This did not happen until one year later.
 - In January, 2007 the EMD requested that the Board of Supervisors declare January as National Radon Awareness Month.
 - In August 2007 George Faggella from the DPH Radon Office spoke to the Board about the results of the 2007 Tahoe Radon Survey and Ginger Huber started distributing the RRNC booklets. The survey showed 38% of the homes in the Sierra Nevada had elevated radon.
 - In September 2007, I spoke to this Board requesting a radon ordinance to cover the rebuilding of the 242 homes lost in the Angora Fire. Larry Lohman of the Development

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at Board Hearing of 1/12/10

Services assured me that every building permit would have the EPA RRNC book attached to it. This did not happen.

- In October 2007, this Board followed EMD's and Development Services opposition to a radon ordinance and rejected it, in favor of a radon education and outreach program.
- January, 2008, this Board accepted EMD's Radon Awareness Program with a written plan that could be monitored. Two years later, as of January, 2010, (and after meeting with Ginger Huber and Bob Green in 2008), I could only count 3 out of 18 bulleted items that were completed.
- March, 2008. EMD did not attend Supervisor Norma Santiago's Green Building Open House at LTCC.
- June 2008, I request that this Board request testing of all County buildings for radon. EMD was silent on this request.
- April 2009, EMD agrees to test "selected" buildings. They leave me out of the loop so I have no idea how the tests came out or which buildings were tested. Freedom of Information Act?
- May 2009, EMD issues a press release on the Tahoe Radon Map and urged that all residents test their home. However, no mention of a call for a radon ordinance or building radon out in new homes and no display of the map showing 90% of the homes in the high to very high radon potential.
- September, 2009, El Dorado County Environmental Health handed out free radon test kits and info at the Barton Health Fair.
- The EMD web page now has references to radon, but only to State and Federal resources. There is no reference to what El Dorado County is doing about radon problems, the attached map is not displayed, and there is still no training of builders and contractors.

5. You judge their actions over the last 5 years and you tell me if this agency is aggressively dealing with radon as a major health issue. It seems to me they are going through some of the motions, but their heart is not in it.

6. In 2009 I requested a Grand Jury investigation of EMD's inaction on their Radon Awareness Program. EMD responded by saying in so many words that they do not want to be held accountable to their plan and that they consider 3 out of 18 items accomplished in two years as reasonable progress.

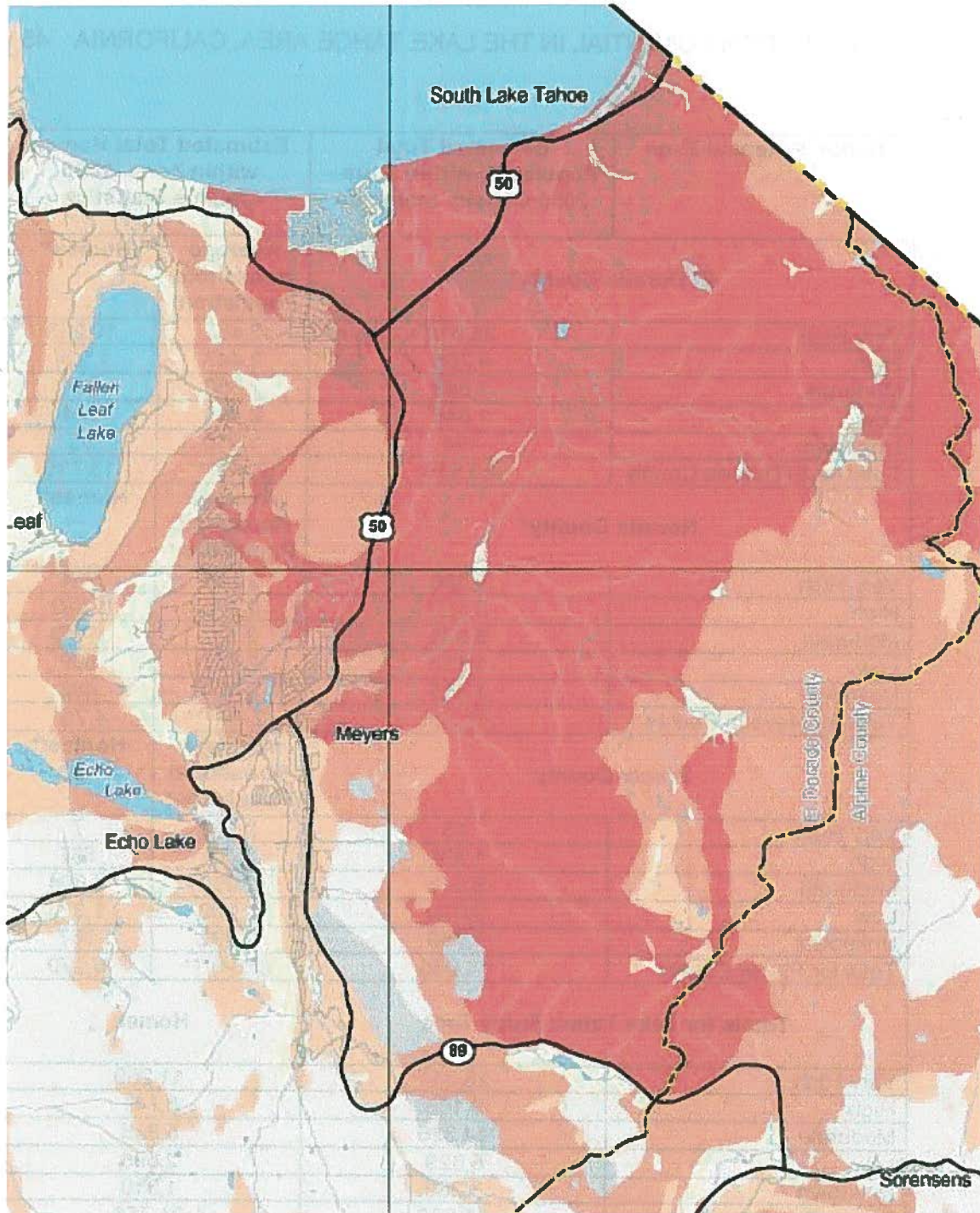
7. I admit that I am and have been critical of EMD in the past for their inaction on radon, but I want to assure the Board and EMD that I am willing to work with them when they can commit to taking positive action or at least accomplishing items on their own plan. I think they must look at me as a money grubbing contractor who is only in this for a buck. Do government people have a natural distrust for business people? Can't we work together for the good of the public? I say judge only by results. Money is not the enemy. In-action is the enemy. I am not a contractor. I do not mitigate or test for radon. I sell a radon tester and a book for the do-it-yourselfer. I am a national and state certified radon consultant and I host a web page on radon at Tahoe. I am not the enemy. But I will continue to be critical when I see government agencies which are not living up to their potential in protecting the public's health.

Jeff Miner

Radon At Tahoe

<http://www.RadonAtTahoe.com>

**Map from: Radon Potential in the Lake Tahoe Area, California
CGS Special Report 221, 2009**



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Indoor Radon Potential

Red	Very High
Orange	High
Tan	Moderate
Yellow	Low
Gray	Unknown

Radon Potential Zone	Estimated Total Population within Zone--2000 Census Statistics	Estimated Total Homes within Zone--2000 Census Statistics	
El Dorado County*		Average Household Population*	Homes**
Very High	25,610	2.487	10,298
High	4,708	2.447	1,924
Moderate	1,843	2.350	784
Low	1,646	2.443	674
Unknown	106	1.915	55
Total for El Dorado County	33,913	(2.46)***	13,735
Nevada County*		Average Household Population*	Homes**
Very High	2,686	2.786	964
High	3,120	2.475	1,260
Moderate	3,970	2.737	1,450
Low	1,653	2.807	589
Unknown	1,365	2.800	488
Total for Nevada County	12,794	(2.69)***	4,751
Placer County*		Average Household Population*	Homes**
Very High	15	2.190	7
High	1,338	2.401	557
Moderate	8,513	2.362	3,604
Low	3,030	2.269	1,335
Unknown	1,759	2.292	767
Total for Placer County	14,665	(2.34)***	6,270
Totals for Lake Tahoe Study Area		Homes	
Very High	28,311	11,269	
High	9,166	3,741	
Moderate	14,326	5,838	
Low	6,329	2,598	
Unknown	3,230	1,310	
Total within Lake Tahoe Area	61,362	24,756	

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Table 10. Population and Home Estimates by Radon Potential Zone and County within the Lake Tahoe Area

*Estimated Using 2000 Census Block Data and the Lake Tahoe Area Radon Potential Zone Map;

**Est. Population + Avg. Household Pop

***Est. Population + Homes