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Comments: The Lake Alpine Improvement Association ("LAIA" or "Association"), consisting of all recreational residences and the Lake Alpine Lodge on Highway 4, is in support of the Hazard Tree Management Project and the environmental analysis as presented in the recently released documents by the Forest Service.

During the summer months, the Lake Alpine Recreation Area serves as an important affordable get-away for working families from cities to the rural Central Valley and foothills. Here, people can experience all that the Sierra has to offer and develop an appreciation for our national forests.

For several years we have watched the drought and insect or disease infestations weaken and kill our trees in the Lake Alpine area. This forest decline has created hazardous conditions that threaten the public (including cabin owners and their friends and families) who are using the facilities, structures, trails, and access roads in the area.

Equally concerning is the heavy fuel load resulting from the death and weakening of our forest over the years. We have had no fire in the area for over a century, allowing the fuel load to reach a very hazardous level. A wildfire today would devastate the area, resulting in human loss of life or injury and destroying the flora and fauna of the area, completely wiping out wildlife habitat. In short, a significant impact will result from doing nothing -- until a fire occurs.

We encourage inclusion of as much area as possible in the Project area, including the north side of Highway 4 that encompasses all three groups of residential lots (Upper Ten, Central Area, and Bee Gulch) on Forest Service land at Lake Alpine. The Association would like to cooperate with the Forest Service to make the Hazard Tree Management Project a success.

Mary E. Handel,
LAIA President