

# New panel pushes for Tahoe 2022 Olympics

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With Lake Tahoe as the potential host, the newly-formed California Winter Games Committee is exploring how to best position the state in a bid for the 2022 Winter Games.

“California’s natural terrain, beauty and resources are renowned across the globe as world class, and that makes our state an ideal choice for a world class event like the Winter Olympics,” said California state Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, in a statement.

Though it’s still growing, the committee already includes representatives from the Northern California World Trade Center, the California Alliance for Jobs and the Sacramento City Council among other business and civic organizations with regional and state interests. The committee will work with Nevada’s Reno-Tahoe Winter Games Coalition to bolster both states’ case for the games.

“We believe California needs a strong statewide effort to match up with the knowledge and resources from Nevada to create a unique carefully constructed and economically feasible plan,” said Michael Faust, interim president of the committee and CEO and president of the Northern California World Trade Center, in a statement. “While 2022 may seem like a long way off, the first hard deadlines could be as soon as 2012. We must move now and we must move quickly.”

The committee will look at the potential economic and environmental impact of the Olympics. It will launch opinion polls and host open-forum meetings. It will assess the current infrastructure and gauge what would be needed in order to host the world’s largest sporting event. But even before all that, there is a problem.

“We are not considering any bids until our negotiations with the IOC are complete,” said Patrick Sandusky, a spokesman for the United States Olympic Committee.

The USOC halted bids until a resolution to the long-running dispute with the International Olympic Committee over revenue sharing can be formed. Though there has been positive dialogue between the two, the negotiations have an open-ended timeline, Sandusky said.

There is no set deadline for a bid for the 2022 Winter Games, but it would likely be around two years after the deadline for the 2020 bids, which is set for mid-September of this year, Sandusky said. He would not comment on whether or not the negotiations would be finished in time for a 2022 bid.

According to a survey of 1,000 Californians contracted by the committee, 90 percent said California’s business, civic non-profit and government leaders should pursue hosting the Winter Olympics in the Lake Tahoe region. Among the mostly business representatives, the Reno-Tahoe Olympic movement has attracted one state legislator, Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Roseville, who is “in the queue” to be added to the committee.

“From my vantage point, we want to make sure there are community benefits to having the Olympics in the Reno-Tahoe area,” Gaines said.

Jon Killoran, president of the decade-old Reno Tahoe Winter Games Coalition, is happy that there’s another organization bringing attention to the possibility of hosting the Olympics in the Reno-Tahoe region, he said.

“Certainly it would take both states to make it happen,” Killoran said. “We’re enthused by anyone who has enthusiasm for the Olympics.”

Events like the Amgen Tour of California and the American Century Championship golf tournament show that Tahoe

can host large events, Killoran said.

As the committee is still in its early phases, they don't have all the answers yet, but they will work towards getting them, Faust said.

"We want to make sure we as a region are well-positioned for an Olympic bid," he said.

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