

# Jumbo fate hanging in the balance

*By Adrian Bergles  
Pioneer Staff*

The Jumbo resort development will get the green light today if a motion passes at the Regional District of East Kootenay board meeting in Cranbrook.

The motion is to approve taking the decision on the Jumbo resort to the provincial government and recommending that they establish a "mountain resort improvement district," said board chair Greg Deck.

This is a limited form of local government, similar to a municipality.

The vote will be made by 15 board members - four of whom represent the Columbia Valley. Invermere mayor Mark Shmigelsky, Area F director Martin Cullen and Area G director Klara Trescher are expected to vote against the motion.

Board chair and Radium Hot Springs mayor Greg Deck has stated in the past that he is in favour of the Jumbo resort development.

The controversial motion is expected to be made by newly-elected director David Wilks from Sparwood.

Many of those opposed to the Jumbo project have said that the decision must remain with the regional district. Opponents say more public input is needed on the project, which was first suggested in 1990.

"The people who don't think it's gone their way yet, don't think there's been enough review," said Mr. Deck.

Columbia River-Revelstoke MLA Norm Macdonald is outspoken in his opposition to the motion. He said sending the resort's future to Victoria would be a bad thing for local citizens. "If it's sent to Victoria you're taking away the opportunity for people to be heard," he said. "As a principle you would never send something that can be handled locally to Victoria."

Mr. Macdonald said the motion to create a resort municipality would circumvent the democratic process. "You are essentially setting up a governance model that is removed from democratic control," said Mr. Macdonald.

He said as there is no population at jumbo, and therefore no voters' the developer would exercise total control over the improvement district.

Mr. Macdonald said his constituency has received about 600 visits, phone calls, emails, and handwritten letters on jumbo, most opposing the resort development.

Mr. Deck, on the other hand, said granting the provincial government the authority to create a mountain resort municipality is not a miscarriage of democracy.

"The same board that would vote on rezoning is voting on this motion," he said. I don't understand how it's any less democratic."

He said mountain resort improvement districts already exist at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort near Golden and Sun Peaks Resort near Kamloops.

I think the rhetoric is obscuring some of the substance," he said.

Mr. Deck said the province has asked the regional district to allow them to create the municipal government.

"This is something the province has said if they receive they will proceed," he said.

"It's not as if we're saying we don't want to make this decision."