**TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY**

**OPERATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**February 25, 2026**

**TRPA/ZOOM**

CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Ms. Laine called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

Members present: Ms. Hebert (for Mr. Aguilar), Ms. Holloway (for Ms. Gustafson), Ms. Hill, Mr. Rice, Ms. Laine

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Laura Patten, Natural Resource Director at the League to Save Lake Tahoe (Keep Tahoe Blue), said that the League to Save Lake Tahoe strongly supports the proposed 2026 watercraft inspection fee schedule presented to the committee. She noted that, with the recent discovery of golden mussels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the ongoing threat posed by aquatic invasive species, maintaining a strong and well-funded inspection and decontamination program is essential to protecting both Lake Tahoe's water clarity and the region's recreation-based economy.

Ms. Patten expressed particular appreciation for the simplified decontamination fee structure included in the proposal. She highlighted the importance of the discount offered to vessels that arrive clean, drained, and dry, explaining that the staggered fee structure creates a clear incentive for responsible boater behavior. She further noted that the structure helps ensure the program can sustainably cover the costs associated with mandatory decontaminations.

Ms. Patten stated that Keep Tahoe Blue is proud to support aquatic invasive species prevention efforts through its Eyes on the Lake program and the Aquatic Invasive Species Defense Team Volunteer Program. She added that the organization will continue supporting the program through public education and outreach, including efforts to reinforce the "clean, drain, dry" messaging associated with the inspection program and the proposed fee structure.

Ms. Patten said the organization is currently working with the California State Legislature to advance additional statewide aquatic invasive species prevention efforts. She emphasized that protecting Lake Tahoe requires prevention measures that extend beyond the Tahoe Basin itself.

Ms. Patten concluded by encouraging the committee to recommend approval of the proposed 2026 watercraft inspection fee schedule to the full Governing Board.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Cox stated that there were no changes to the agenda.
Ms. Laine deemed the agenda approved as posted.

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3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Holloway moved approval of January 28, 2026, minutes as presented.
**Motion carried.**

4. Discussion and possible recommendation for approval of January Financials

Mr. Chad Cox, TRPA Chief Financial Officer, presented the item. Mr. Cox said that staff have been working on the agency's annual state reporting requirements for the State of Nevada. This process includes compiling the agency's audited financial statements, the annual report that was scheduled for presentation later in the meeting, and an analysis allocating financial figures between the two states. He noted that the package also includes a letter jointly submitted by Ms. Julie Regan and Mr. Devin Middlebrook to the State of Nevada. Staff are currently finalizing the materials, which are due at the end of the week, and anticipate submitting the completed package on Thursday.

Turning to the financial overview (slide 8), Mr. Cox reported that revenues are currently at 51 percent of the adopted budget, indicating that the agency is tracking well. Expenditures total $11.9 million, representing 38 percent of the budget. He added that compensation expenses are on track and that the agency expects contract expenditures to increase as grant-funded projects continue to be implemented.

(Slide 9) Mr. Cox then provided a breakdown of revenue sources. He explained that several revenue categories are already complete for the fiscal year, which is expected because state and local revenues typically arrive earlier in the fiscal cycle.

Mr. Cox highlighted that the most significant change since the committee last reviewed the financials relates to second quarter grant invoicing, which was completed in January. Grant revenues now total $3.2 million fiscal year-to-date, representing an increase of approximately $1.8 million compared to the previous quarter. He noted that staff continue to make steady progress on grant implementation, associated contracting, and invoicing activities.

Mr. Cox explained that the next increase in grant revenue will appear in the April financial statements, which the committee will review in May. He added that a significant portion of grant revenue is typically recognized at the end of the fiscal year in July, when the fiscal year is finalized.

Mr. Cox said that all grant invoices that could be submitted at this time have been completed. He also reported that the team has returned to full staffing levels, noting that Ms. Carlson had recently returned from maternity leave. In addition, all transportation-related invoices that could be submitted have been completed. As a result, current grant revenue levels are slightly higher than they were at the same point in the previous year.

Mr. Cox then reviewed additional revenue categories. Rental revenues are currently at 58 percent, which aligns closely with the fiscal year timeline. Other revenue, which is largely driven by investment income, also remains on track. Mr. Cox noted that the agency recently recorded its quarterly LAIF (Local Agency Investment Fund) interest income, bringing that category in line with projected annual levels. Mr. Cox concluded that, overall, the agency's revenue outlook appears to be in good state.

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Mr. John Cox then moved to expenditures (slide 10). He reported that total expenditures through January totaled $11.9 million. He noted that there was an increase in expenses recorded during January, explaining that in December the agency had completed only one accounts payable processing cycle due to the office closure during the final two weeks of the month. As a result, expenses that would normally have been processed in December were processed in January, leading to a higher monthly total.

Mr. Cox said that $2.3 million in expenses were recorded during January. These expenditures included both standard accounts payable items, such as contracts and operational expenses including utilities, as well as employee compensation costs. He said that compensation expenses are currently at approximately 57 percent of the annual budget, which aligns with expectations for this point in the fiscal year. Overall, Mr. Cox indicated that expenditure levels appear to be tracking appropriately against the budget.

Mr. Cox added that "Other" expenses appear slightly lower than expected at this time - however, he noted that those funds are expected to be spent before the end of the fiscal year. He added that several facility-related projects remain underway. One recent improvement includes the completion of the agency's employee gym, which is now operational. Staff have begun using the facility and that it has been well received.

Mr. Cox highlighted mitigation expenses, noting that the agency disbursed approximately $900,000 in January from the mitigation accounts. These funds supported several previously approved projects in the City of South Lake Tahoe, including the Street Sweeper Project, Bijou Area improvements, and the Pioneer Trail Pedestrian Park project. Mr. Cox concluded by noting that mitigation revenues and mitigation expenditures are currently relatively balanced, which is the desired outcome for the program.

Mr. Cox then reviewed cash flow (slide 11). He reported that the agency received approximately $1.8 million in receipts during the month of January. He explained that the primary driver of these receipts was grant invoice payments, noting that some of those payments are received quickly through ACH (Automated Clearing House) transfers. In addition to grant reimbursements, the receipts also included fee income. Mr. Cox added that the agency recorded $3.3 million in disbursements during January, primarily associated with payroll and contractual payments.

As a result, the agency experienced a net use of cash during the month, which Mr. Cox indicated was expected at this stage of the fiscal year. Despite the January outflows, the agency maintains a cumulative cash balance of approximately $6.2 million through January.

Mr. Cox explained that the agency anticipates drawing down that balance over the remainder of the fiscal year as expenses continue to be incurred. He also noted that the dashed lines shown on the slide represent cash flow patterns from prior years, which illustrate the typical trend the agency expects to follow through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Cox then offered additional context regarding comments about the agency's budget growth. He explained that the graph on slide 12 was intended to address feedback the agency has received - that Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's budget has grown significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly since 2020. He said the graph was intended to provide context regarding the composition of that growth, rather than to review actual financial performance.

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Mr. Cox explained that the chart separates the agency's General Fund revenues from grant revenues in order to illustrate the drivers behind the overall increase in the agency's budget. On the chart, the solid gray bar represents General Fund revenue, while the white bar represents grant revenues based on budgeted amounts.

He reported that General Fund revenues have increased at an average rate of approximately 4.5 percent annually over the past six years, and offered clear explanations for these increases. One of the primary drivers has been planning fees, which have increased both due to inflation adjustments applied under the agency's Rules of Procedure and an increase in the overall volume of permit applications and planning activity.

Mr. Cox also noted that investment income has increased over the past two fiscal years, largely as a result of higher interest rates. In addition, he explained that contributions from the States of Nevada and California have increased since 2020. Nevada increased its contribution to reach its one-third funding share, and the agency also received additional funding from Nevada for a scanning enhancement project currently underway. Both states also provided incremental funding to support employee salary increases during the previous fiscal year.

Mr. Cox then discussed grant revenues, which he noted have increased substantially over the same six-year period. He reported that grant funding has increased to approximately 2.7 times the level it was six years ago, rising from approximately $6 million to approximately $17 million.

Mr. Cox explained that this growth has been largely driven by the availability of funding through the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which has supported additional project implementation in the Tahoe Basin. Additional grant funding has also been received through programs such as the California State Transportation Agency Transportation Grant Program, as well as housing-related grants, including Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) grants and Higher Impact Transformative (HIT) grants. Mr. Cox conclude that the overall increase in grant funding reflects a greater level of project implementation occurring throughout the basin, which is as a positive development.

Committee Comments

Ms. Laine commented that grant funding is currently helping many agencies remain operational, but emphasized that such funding is not a sustainable long-term revenue source. She expressed appreciation for Mr. Cox's breakdown of General Fund revenues versus grant revenues, noting that the distinction was helpful in understanding the agency's financial structure.

Mr. Cox responded that staff often discuss contracts and grant funding together, as they are closely linked. He explained that the agency does not staff at levels that assume continued grant funding, and instead typically relies on external partners to implement grant-funded projects. As a result, fluctuations in grant funding levels do not directly impact core staffing levels, allowing the agency to remain stable as grant funding increases or decreases over time.

Ms. Julie Regan, Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, stated that she appreciated the presentation and the clarity it provided. She noted that it was important for the committee to understand the distinction between General Fund growth and grant-related increases, particularly given perceptions that the agency's budget is steadily rising.

Ms. Regan explained that while the overall budget may appear to be increasing, the portion represented by grant funding, as the white section of the chart, is largely directed toward project

implementation across the Tahoe Basin. She cited aquatic invasive species prevention work as one example of these efforts. She emphasized that while the agency does recover some administrative costs associated with managing these grants, the majority of the funding is passed through to project implementers.

Ms. Regan further explained that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency serves as a fiscal agent for many of these funds, particularly those associated with the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, and works in partnership with multiple entities through the Environmental Improvement Program. She noted that the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act funding is the result of Team Tahoe's coordinated efforts to secure annual federal appropriations, which support the federal share of basin-wide environmental projects. She added that additional funding is also provided through state and other public sources.

Turning to the General Fund, Ms. Regan noted that it is composed of several revenue sources, including planning and filing fees, for which the agency is still working toward achieving full cost recovery. She also stated that state contributions have remained largely flat over the past 20 years, and only recently have there been increases. She acknowledged the role of the Nevada congressional delegation and Governing Board members in helping Nevada return to its one-third funding share. She also noted that there have been limited cost-of-living adjustments to help address rising salary costs.

Ms. Regan concluded by emphasizing that, despite these recent adjustments, state appropriations have not kept pace with the agency's growing costs, and this ongoing imbalance presents a continuing challenge for the agency.

**Motion:**

Ms. Holloway made a motion to recommend Governing Board acceptance of the January 2026 Financials

**Ayes:** Mr. Bass, Ms. Hebert, Ms. Holloway, Ms. Hill, Mr. Rice, Ms. Laine

**Motion passed.**

5.B. Discussion and possible recommendation for adoption of the proposed watercraft inspection fees for the 2026 season

Mr. Tom Boos, Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Coordinator for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, presented the item. He explained that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Code requires the Governing Board to approve the watercraft inspection fee schedule on an annual basis. He stated that staff are recommending that the Board approve the proposed 2026 fee schedule. He added that he would include a brief update on the 2025 inspection season.

Mr. Boos introduced a map (slide 17) prepared by the agency's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team, which displays the origins of watercraft visiting Lake Tahoe during the 2024 and 2025 seasons. He explained that the black lines on the map represent the travel paths of boats, with the endpoint indicating Lake Tahoe as the destination. The map reflects the last waterbody visited by each vessel prior to arriving at Lake Tahoe.

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Mr. Boos said that the orange areas on the map represent states and provinces where invasive mussels are present, while the white areas indicate jurisdictions where invasive mussels have not been detected. He explained that the map illustrates the significant level of risk associated with incoming watercraft, as many vessels originate from or travel through areas with known infestations. He highlighted that the data shows boats traveling to Lake Tahoe from a wide geographic range, including several vessels arriving from Alaska, as indicated on the map.

Mr. Boos explained that the agency's role includes assessing risk associated with incoming watercraft, and that a key component of that assessment is understanding where vessels originate. Mr. Boos noted that many states located east of the 100th meridian, including areas such as eastern Montana and Colorado, are considered high-risk due to widespread invasive mussel infestations. As a result, the program often treats entire states as infested from a risk management perspective, particularly where monitoring and detection efforts may be inconsistent.

Mr. Boos added that western states generally have more robust inspection and monitoring programs, whereas that level of effort is not always consistent across other regions.

He further explained that the agency gathers this data through a shared regional database connected with multiple western states, and noted that California is in the process of being integrated into that system. This data-sharing system enables the agency to maintain a comprehensive understanding of watercraft movement and associated invasive species risks.

Slide 18 - Mr. Boos reminded the committee that during his presentation in the previous year, staff had identified the golden mussel as a new and emerging threat. The map displayed showed the extent of the infestation as of March 2025, which was concentrated in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, relatively close to Lake Tahoe.

Mr. Boos said that since that time, the situation has evolved, and the golden mussel now represents the most immediate invasive mussel threat to Lake Tahoe. He explained that the golden mussel poses a greater risk than quagga and zebra mussels because it is able to tolerate lower calcium levels, which are characteristic of Lake Tahoe. As a result, the species is capable of surviving and establishing itself in the lake. He added that golden mussels reproduce more rapidly than quagga and zebra mussels, making them particularly difficult to manage. Mr. Boos characterized the species as a more severe threat overall.

Mr. Boos reported that approximately 90 percent of watercraft inspected at Tahoe's inspection stations have recently visited a California water body, which increases the likelihood of introduction given the proximity of the infestation. He emphasized that the risk of golden mussels being transported to Lake Tahoe via watercraft is significant.

Mr. Boos then presented an updated map showing the current spread of the golden mussel infestation. He explained that the original infestation cluster has expanded significantly and is now spreading south through the California Aqueduct. To date, there has been no evidence of infestation outside of these connected water systems, meaning that there has been no confirmed overland spread via watercraft or other transport mechanisms. He said that this suggests that ongoing education, prevention efforts, and responsible boater behavior may be helping to limit the spread beyond connected waterways.

Slide 19 - Mr. Boos moved on to provide an update on the 2025 watercraft inspection season and program implementation. He noted that, during the previous year, the agency implemented mandatory

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decontaminations for all watercraft, and he expressed appreciation to the Governing Board for approving the associated fee structure, which enabled the program to support this change.

He explained that the shift to mandatory decontaminations effectively doubled the program's workload, as previously only approximately half of incoming vessels required decontamination. Historically, vessels that arrived clean, drained, and dry were considered low risk and did not require treatment. The updated protocol now requires decontamination for all vessels, regardless of condition, in order to address the increased risk posed by invasive species such as the golden mussel.

Mr. Boos said that the approved fee adjustments allowed the program to add one additional staff member at each inspection station, which has been necessary to manage the increased workload.

Mr. Boos noted that the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has 17 to 18 years of experience operating the watercraft inspection and decontamination program, and that this expertise was called upon following the discovery of golden mussels in California. He explained that agency staff worked closely with state agencies and water managers in California to help develop the Golden Mussel Task Force response plan.

Slide 20 - Mr. Boos then summarized key outcomes from the 2025 season. He reported that the number of watercraft inspections remained consistent with prior years, with approximately 5,000 inspections conducted, a level that has remained relatively stable in recent years. He reiterated that decontamination numbers doubled as a direct result of the transition to mandatory decontamination protocols.

Mr. Boos emphasized the significant role played by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, noting that the team responded quickly and effectively to the increased operational demands. He commended their efforts, stating that they mobilized rapidly and demonstrated a strong commitment to protecting Lake Tahoe under heightened risk conditions.

Mr. Boos also highlighted the importance of public outreach and communications efforts during the 2025 season. He specifically recognized Ms. McKenzie Koch, Education and Outreach Specialist, as well as the agency's communications team, for their work in educating boaters and the public about the new requirements and risks. He noted that implementing these changes required a significant effort to ensure public understanding and compliance.

Mr. Boos reported that during the 2025 season, the program intercepted 73 vessels carrying aquatic invasive species, including species beyond mussels. Of those, 12 vessels were found to have quagga or zebra mussels, and one vessel was found to have a golden mussel. Mr. Boos explained that it is unusual to find a single mussel on a vessel, as inspectors typically encounter multiple organisms or clear evidence of infestation rather than an isolated specimen.

Mr. Boos emphasized that outreach and partnerships were critical to the program's success during the 2025 season. He explained that a key focus area was the non-motorized boating community, including paddlers, as these users do not pass through formal inspection stations and therefore are more difficult to reach with education and prevention messaging.

To address this gap, Mr. Boos highlighted the expansion of the Tahoe Keepers program, a voluntary stewardship initiative in which participants watch an educational video, complete a quiz, and commit to clean, drain, and dry practices. He reported that the program now includes 8,351 registered Tahoe

Keepers, with 837 new participants added in 2025, compared to a 15-year average of 556 annual registrations, indicating a significant increase in participation.

Mr. Boos also described strong partnerships with nonprofit organizations, including the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Tahoe Fund. He noted that the League implemented a “Chance to Win” raffle program, where individuals who registered as Tahoe Keepers were entered into monthly prize drawings and a year-end grand prize drawing. He said this initiative was effective in driving participation and new registrations.

Slide 21 - Mr. Boos explained that the Tahoe Fund supported billboard campaigns placed along major highways leading into the Tahoe Basin, helping to raise awareness among incoming visitors. He also noted that the program received television media coverage at both local and regional levels, further expanding outreach efforts.

Mr. Boos highlighted a collaboration with the Tahoe Environmental Research Center, which developed an interactive educational exhibit. He explained that the exhibit includes hands-on elements, such as a kayak, life jackets, and float tubes, to demonstrate proper clean, drain, and dry techniques. The exhibit also incorporates a web-based application that guides users through identifying and addressing invasive species risks, including checking for mud, plants, animals, and water. Mr. Boos noted that the agency plans to deploy this tool at the Meyers inspection station to evaluate public engagement.

Mr. Boos reported that the agency also conducted a direct mail campaign reaching approximately 96,000 households, targeting areas with the highest visitation rates to Lake Tahoe. He also noted that Ms. Koch participated in 25 outreach events, engaging directly with approximately 2,400 individuals.

Mr. Boos further emphasized the program’s success in social media engagement and recruitment, noting a significant increase in reach and interaction. He commended Ms. Koch for her creativity and effectiveness in developing engaging content, including themed campaigns such as a Valentine’s Day social media post designed to promote invasive species awareness in an accessible and engaging manner.

Slide 22 - Mr. Boos explained that following the discovery of New Zealand mud snails in 2023, the agency identified a gap in outreach to non-motorized watercraft users, who are not required to pass through inspection stations. In response, the agency initiated a roving inspector program in 2024, hiring two staff members to engage directly with this user group.

Mr. Boos described the role of roving inspectors, who visit beaches throughout the Tahoe Basin, interact with individuals using non-motorized watercraft, and provide education on aquatic invasive species prevention, including proper clean, drain, and dry practices.

He reported that the program proved to be highly successful and was expanded in 2025. The roving inspectors operated across 30 different beaches, each working approximately 107 days during the season. Collectively, they conducted approximately 17,400 direct interactions with members of the public, significantly increasing the program’s reach to audiences that would otherwise not be engaged.

Mr. Boos stated that roving inspectors also conducted inspections of 100 non-motorized watercraft, and referred 78 of those vessels to formal inspection stations after identifying them as high-risk, such as vessels originating from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta or other infested water bodies.

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In addition, the roving inspectors conducted 99 inspections of electric hydrofoil boards, which, although motorized, are hand-launched and easily transported, allowing them to bypass traditional inspection points. Mr. Boos emphasized that this represents an important role for the roving inspectors in addressing potential gaps in the inspection system.

Mr. Boos commended the roving inspection team, describing them as dedicated and effective stewards. He noted that one team member had previously served as a watercraft inspector and chose to transition to a roving role due to his interest in direct public engagement.

Mr. Boos shared feedback from a post-season debrief with the roving inspectors, noting that the team identified the roving role as more demanding than station-based inspection work, due to the continuous need to actively engage with the public throughout the day. He explained that, unlike inspection stations where boaters arrive intermittently, roving inspectors must proactively seek out and interact with individuals, moving between locations as needed. Mr. Boos concluded by expressing appreciation for the team's efforts and stated that he is looking forward to continued success and expansion of the roving inspector program in the upcoming season.

Slide 23 - Mr. Tom Boos then addressed signage efforts as a key component of the program's outreach strategy. Mr. Boos described a new sign campaign centered on the message " We Clean, Drain, Dry. Do You?", which features images of individuals engaging in non-motorized water recreation. He explained that the intent of the signage is to build a sense of shared responsibility and community expectation, encouraging individuals to adopt proper aquatic invasive species prevention behaviors.

Mr. Boos noted that the signs are strategically placed along pathways between parking areas and the water, ensuring that individuals encounter the messaging immediately before launching watercraft. He explained that the design of the signs is intended to capture attention, including elements aimed at engaging both adults and children, such as visual imagery and accessible messaging.

Mr. Boos reported that the agency has installed 113 signs throughout the Tahoe Basin and is currently working with landowners to install an additional 49 signs, for a total of 162 planned installations.

He said that early indicators suggest the signage campaign is having a positive impact, noting that responses collected through the Tahoe Keepers program and at inspection stations show a gradual increase in the number of individuals identifying signage as a source of information about aquatic invasive species and clean, drain, and dry practices.

Slide 24 - Mr. Tom Boos then moved to the proposed 2026 watercraft inspection fee structure.
He explained that the program's operational approach will remain unchanged from 2025, including the continuation of mandatory decontaminations for all watercraft. He said that staff are not proposing any increase to watercraft inspection sticker fees. Instead, the proposal focuses on restructuring decontamination fees to better address the golden mussel threat and to simplify the fee system for both staff and the public.
He noted that the proposed fee structure (slide 25) reflects the actual costs associated with performing decontaminations, consistent with the Environmental Improvement Program model of public and private partnership funding. He explained that the program is funded through a combination of user fees, state funding, and federal funding, and that the proposed fee adjustments are intended to keep pace with the increased costs associated with the expanded workload.

Mr. Boos outlined the proposed decontamination fees as follows:

- Simple watercraft: $60
- Complex watercraft: $100
- Watercraft with attached mussels: $350 (no change from the current fee)

Mr. Boos explained that the distinction between simple and complex watercraft is based on the number and type of water intake systems, which represent the highest risk for retaining invasive species. He noted that simple watercraft have one to two intake systems, while complex watercraft have three or more intake systems or ballast systems, which increase the likelihood of retained water and associated risk.

Mr. Boos highlighted that the proposal introduces a 50 percent discount for watercraft that arrive clean, drained, and dry, applied to both the simple and complex fee categories. He explained that this change reflects a shift from a primarily punitive fee structure to an incentive-based approach, intended to encourage responsible boater behavior.

Mr. Boos stated that the revised structure is informed by lessons learned during the previous year, when the program operated in a reactive, emergency response mode following the emergence of the golden mussel threat. The proposed changes represent an evolution toward a more proactive and behavior-driven strategy.

He emphasized that the long-term goal of the program is to change boater behavior and noted that data indicates progress in this area. Historically, approximately one-third of boaters arrived clean, drained, and dry, while in recent years that figure has increased to approximately 50 percent. Mr. Boos said that the program aims to further increase this percentage through the introduction of incentives such as the proposed discount.

Committee Comments/Questions

Ms. Holloway expressed appreciation for the presentation and commended the program's emphasis on education and outreach. She said public education is critical, as most people visiting Lake Tahoe are willing to act responsibly when provided with clear information. She said these efforts have already demonstrated a positive impact on the program. Ms. Holloway then asked for clarification regarding how the "clean, drain, dry" condition is determined when a boater arrives at an inspection station.

Mr. Boos responded that inspectors conduct a comprehensive inspection of each watercraft, examining the vessel from top to bottom, front to back. He explained that inspectors specifically look for the presence of mud, plants, animals, or standing water. This includes physically accessing different parts of the vessel, such as entering the boat, lowering the engine, and inspecting components such as the anchor and other areas where water or debris may accumulate.

Mr. Boos said that if any mud, plants, animals, or water are identified, the vessel is not considered clean, drained, and dry. He acknowledged that while the determination can sometimes be challenging, the criteria themselves are straightforward.

He explained that inspectors document their findings in the program's database, which identifies the areas of the vessel that require decontamination. He noted that water intake systems are always

decontaminated, and that any additional areas found to contain risk factors are also addressed during the decontamination process.

Ms. Laine then asked whether the roving inspectors identified any aquatic invasive species on non-motorized watercraft during their fieldwork. Mr. Boos responded that, to his knowledge, the roving inspectors did not identify any aquatic invasive species attached to non-motorized watercraft, such as kayaks or paddleboards. He explained that their inspections primarily identified risk factors, including the presence of mud, plants, animals, or water, which can serve as vectors for the spread of invasive species, rather than confirmed infestations.

Ms. Laine then asked whether, if the proposed fee structure and discount had been applied to the previous year's data, the program would still be financially viable given current staffing needs and partnership with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

Mr. Boos responded that the program would remain financially sustainable under the proposed structure. He explained that the prior year's decontamination fee structure was more complex, involving multiple steps, but that it did generate revenue to help offset operational costs, which are significant due to the time and resources required for decontamination.

Mr. Boos added that staff anticipate having sufficient budget resources to support program operations in the upcoming year, even with the proposed discount structure in place.

Ms. Laine expressed appreciation for the program's outreach efforts and the enthusiasm of staff, noting that the Tahoe Resource Conservation District is also highly committed to the program's success. She stated that this level of dedication has contributed significantly to the program's effectiveness.

**Motion:**

Ms. Holloway made a motion to recommend Governing Board adopt the 2026 Watercraft Inspection Fee Schedule

**Ayes:** Ms. Hebert, Mr. Bass, Ms. Hill, Ms. Holloway, Mr. Rice, Ms. Laine

**Motion passed.**

5. UPCOMING TOPICS

Mr. Cox provided an overview of upcoming agenda items. He said that staff will present updated financial reports in March and April, and noted that a Treasurer's Report may be brought forward in April, depending on timing.

Mr. Cox also indicated that Ms. Campbell is currently working on mitigation program items, which are expected to be brought before the committee in March.

Looking ahead, Mr. Cox reported that staff are planning for the Governing Board retreat in May. In advance of that retreat, staff will present a preliminary version of the proposed budget to the committee, along with an initial draft of the agency's annual work plan.

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He explained that this initial presentation will provide an opportunity for discussion and feedback, after which staff will further refine the materials. The finalized Fiscal Year 2027 budget is expected to be brought forward for approval in June.

This item was informational only.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

7. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Laine called to adjourn at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tracy Campbell

Tracy Campbell
Executive Assistant

*The above meeting was recorded in its entirety. Anyone wishing to listen to the recording of the above mentioned meeting may find it at https://www.trpa.gov/meeting-materials/. In addition, written documents submitted at the meeting are available for review. If you require assistance locating this information, please contact the TRPA at (775) 588-4547 or virtualmeetinghelp@trpa.gov.*

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