TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

LEGAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

January 28, 2026

TRPA/ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chair Williamson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on January 28, 2026.

Members present: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Leumer, and Ms. Williamson.

Members absent: Mr. Kieckhefer.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Gavin Feiger from Keep Tahoe Blue thanked the Legal Committee, TRPA staff, and Obexer's for their work, especially during the busy summer season and following last year's threat of golden mussels. He emphasized that the recent boat interception and follow-through demonstrate strong, lake-wide commitment to aquatic invasive species defense. He closed by expressing his appreciation.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

TRPA General Counsel Graham St. Michel stated that there were no changes to the agenda.

Chair Williamson deemed the agenda approved as posted.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Aldean made a motion to approve the December 17, 2025 Legal Committee meeting minutes as presented.

Motion carried by voice vote.

IV. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL FOR RESOLUTION OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION: ALEXANDER BULBAS AND DENIS LUZHANSKIY; TAMPERING OF WATERCRAFT SEAL AND ATTEMPT TO LAUNCH WITHOUT AIS INSPECTION, OBEXER'S MARINA, HOMEWOOD, CA TRPA FILE NO. CODE2025-0013

TRPA Code Compliance Program Manager, Steve Sweet, presented the Resolution of Enforcement Action involving Alexander Bulbas and Dennis Luzhanskiy. He explained that the case arose from an incident at Obexer's Marina in July 2025, when Mr. Luzhanskiy attempted to launch a watercraft owned by Mr. Bulbas using a tampered TRPA inspection seal. TRPA later confirmed that the seal had originally been issued at Tahoe Keys Marina in August 2024 but should have been removed when the boat was launched at Folsom Lake

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the day before the attempted launch at Lake Tahoe. The Lake Tahoe seal had been improperly reattached, resulting in violations of TRPA Code Sections 63.4.1 and 63.4.1E, which prohibit launching or attempting to launch a motorized watercraft without proper inspection and prohibit the alteration or unauthorized use of TRPA inspection seals. Both individuals accepted responsibility and agreed to a $5,000 settlement payment to TRPA. Staff recommended that the Governing Board approve the proposed settlement agreement.

Committee Questions & Comments

Committee Member Shelly Aldean asked whether the violation was clearly a deliberate attempt to deceive rather than an accidental oversight, noting that the Compact allows the agency to impose penalties of $5,000 per day for such violations. She then questioned whether the boat's owner was aware that his friend was attempting to launch the vessel without the proper seal after coming from Folsom Lake.

Steve Sweet responded that TRPA was never able to determine exactly who tampered with the seal or who was directly responsible for the attempted launch. He explained that the boat's owner ultimately chose to take responsibility for the violation, even though he maintained that he did not personally alter the seal and has never admitted to doing so. Steve noted that, regardless of the conflicting accounts, the facts of the violation itself were clear.

Steve added that Mr. Bulbas had launched the boat multiple times at Folsom Lake over the summer, indicating he was likely involved to some degree. Because the specific level of responsibility for each person could not be established, TRPA resolved the matter by settling with both individuals jointly.

Shelly Aldean confirmed that resolving the case jointly with both individuals was consistent with TRPA's penalty matrix and asked whether the proposed penalty was fair. Steve Sweet explained that this type of violation—an attempted launch involving a tampered seal—was new for TRPA, though the agency had previously handled attempted launches without proper inspections. He noted that the $5,000 penalty was the largest TRPA had issued for an attempted-launch violation. Ms. Aldean observed that the situation appeared analogous to past cases involving attempts to launch without inspection, and Steve agreed that this was the closest comparison within TRPA's enforcement history.

Shelly Aldean noted that this case involved not only an attempted launch without proper inspection but also a potential additional violation for tampering with a TRPA seal, meaning two separate code provisions were implicated. She observed that past settlements for similar violations have typically been around $4,000, with one case several years ago reaching $7,500, though the specific facts of those cases were not immediately known. Ms. Aldean concluded that the proposed penalty in this case appeared to fall within the historical range, while also noting that TRPA could pursue higher penalties if the matter were taken to court.

Shelly Aldean stated that, in her view, the violation would justify a minimum penalty of $10,000, but she acknowledged that the proposed settlement reflects an effort to avoid litigation. She emphasized that this case differs from a standard attempted launch without inspection because it involved a deliberate attempt to deceive TRPA by reattaching a removed seal. Aldean noted that the individuals clearly knew their actions were improper and commented that, although she was not asking staff to renegotiate the settlement,

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violations of this nature warrant serious consequences. She concluded by cautioning that TRPA will treat similar conduct with significant seriousness going forward.

Steve Sweet responded that he believes the $5,000 penalty is sufficient to get the attention of boat owners and serves as an effective deterrent for this type of violation. He noted that TRPA rarely encounters attempted-launch cases of this nature, and it has been a long time since a similar violation came before the board. Mr. Sweet added that most boat owners would not risk paying a $5,000 penalty if they knew there was a chance of being caught. He stated that while TRPA could pursue higher penalties, staff feels the current amount is appropriate. He also acknowledged Ms. Aldean's concerns and said that if similar violations become more frequent or if the penalty proves insufficient as a deterrent, TRPA should consider increasing the penalty in future cases.

Ms. Aldean asked if Folsom Lake has any known AIS?

Dennis Zabaglo, TRPA Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager, responded that Folsom Lake does have some invasive species present. While no invasive mussels have been detected so far, there are mud snails, invasive clams, and possibly invasive aquatic plants similar to those already known in the region. He also noted that officials recently intercepted a boat carrying golden mussels.

Motion to recommend approval of the Settlement Agreement as noted in Attachment A made by Belinda Faustinos.

Ayes: Ms. Aldean, Ms. Faustinos, Ms. Leumer, and Ms. Williamson
Nays: None.

Motion carried.

V. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

VI. PUBLIC INTEREST COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Aldean moved to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 a.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine Huston
Paralegal

The above meeting was recorded in its entirety. Anyone wishing to listen to the recording 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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