



**Mail**

PO Box 5310  
Stateline, NV 89449-5310

**Location**

128 Market Street  
Stateline, NV 89449

**Contact**

Phone: 775-588-4547  
Fax: 775-588-4527  
[www.trpa.org](http://www.trpa.org)

# NEWS RELEASE

**Contact: Jeff Cowen, Public Information Officer, (775) 589-5278**

For Release Immediately

June 20, 2013

## **LAKE-SAVING INCENTIVES IN REGIONAL PLAN BECOME FULLY EFFECTIVE**

**Lake Tahoe, CA/NV** – New ordinances regarding land coverage at Lake Tahoe came into effect yesterday following final approval of a key water quality plan by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and EPA announced today.

The action updates the Clean Water Act Section 208 Lake Tahoe Water Quality Management Plan— last fully updated in 1988. The 208 Plan provides a comprehensive framework for water quality management in the Lake Tahoe basin and includes provisions for land coverage limits.

Managing the amount of impervious surfaces in the Lake Tahoe watershed, called land coverage, is a critical component of protection plans. Land coverage rules help maintain open space and naturally-functioning soil on each property. Since the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) adopted the first Regional Plan in 1987, the coverage rules also meant some home improvements and expansions were infeasible.

The amendments provide an up-to-date framework that incorporates the science-based approach to restoring Lake Tahoe’s clarity, known as the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The Lake Tahoe TMDL calls for a continued focus on reducing sediment and nutrients found in urban runoff from reaching the Lake. Certification of the 208 Plan by Nevada and California and approval by the U.S. EPA clear the way for implementing land use policies found in TRPA’s recently updated Regional Plan that support the TMDL approach, according to TRPA.

“EPA is committed to restoring water quality and preserving the overall health of Lake Tahoe,” said Jared Blumenfeld, U.S. EPA’s Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. “This plan ensures EPA’s continuing collaboration with our partner agencies to protect the water quality of one of our nation’s most important lakes.”

“Restoring Lake Tahoe is a commitment shared by everyone in the watershed and the approval by the EPA removes regulatory barriers to some of the environmental redevelopment needed to move the dial on lake clarity,” TRPA Executive Director Joanne S. Marchetta said. “The new rules are both better for the environment and will

help our struggling communities reinvent themselves. The basis of the Regional Plan is protecting the centerpiece of our ecosystem while revitalizing our communities.”

New ordinances were adopted by TRPA in December last year to create incentives for completing environmental improvements and upgrades to many of the Region’s older homes. According to the Agency, more than 90 percent of existing homes and businesses pre-date newer environmental guidelines and approximately 22,000 residential properties do not have certified water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control erosion and filter stormwater.

All properties are required to complete BMPs, but most property owners install them only when they carry out a renovation or expansion project, the Agency said, which makes remodeling and reinvestment is good for the lake because more of the existing development in the watershed becomes protected by BMPs, according to TRPA. The action today completes the amendment process and brings land coverage exemptions and credits for certain properties into full effect.

The TRPA and local building departments remind property owners that taking advantage of the new rules requires some permitting and documentation, but for the first time in a generation many properties with high capability soils may be able to plan for a modest expansion. A site assessment to verify existing coverage and the capability of soils may be the first step for many property owners, according to TRPA. More information is available from most local building departments and TRPA.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency cooperatively leads the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region now and in the future. For additional information, call Jeff Cowen at (775) 589-5278 or email him at [jcowen@trpa.org](mailto:jcowen@trpa.org).

###