

TRPA Advisory Planning Commission meeting 6 10 20 Agenda Item III. Public Interest Comments

My name is Lynne Paulson and I wanted to express my concern about TRPA potentially rushing through the public process for the upcoming project entitled: Tahoe Keys Lagoons Aquatic Weed Control Method Test. The Notice of Preparation for this project indicates there will be an attempt to seek exemption from the Lahontan Region Water Quality Control Plan which prohibits the use of aquatic herbicides in the Keys. This exemption would be sought before other non-chemical methods of weed control have been thoroughly examined and tested.

With the global pandemic, extra care must be taken to engage the public whom you represent, not only from California and Nevada, but also a more broad population since Lake Tahoe is of national significance.

It is most disappointing to not be able to face you in person but I understand that current restriction.

Your process of public engagement must be robust and inclusive. During this difficult time you should extend the time for review of projects. This would allow full discussion, public input and resolution of comments on important matters such as the proposed plan to use potentially harmful aquatic herbicides in the Tahoe Keys.

Please add an agenda item to your next APC meeting to address this issue related to public input during the Covid-19 restrictions.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Governing Board Meeting, May 27, 2020

Item XIII, Public Interest Comments

My name is Tobi Tyler. Speaking as an Executive Committee member of both the Tahoe Area Group and the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club, I'd like to express our dismay and concern about your decision to proceed as scheduled with the controversial Tahoe Keys Weeds Draft EIR/EIS during this pandemic despite the extremely diminished public review process. If this meeting is any example, this process is completely inadequate to meet the intent and requirements of NEPA and CEQA. In a letter dated April 28, 2020, we urged TRPA and Lahontan Water Board to delay the Tahoe Keys Weeds EIR/EIS until a process can be developed that ensures that the meetings and workshops during the comment period can be conducted as the law intends. The hallmark of any public environmental review process is the ability of the public – residents and experts alike –to examine, gather, discuss and comment thoughtfully on the complex scientific issues presented in the impact documents.

Curbing the growth and spread of invasive weeds in the Tahoe Keys is an important project. But at the moment, it is not so essential and urgent that the environmental review process must continue at the current rapid pace pursued by the Water Board and TRPA staff during this existing public health crisis. It just isn't realistic to hold adequate meetings on the draft materials between June and August. Attendance assuredly will be required to be limited and telepresence options will further reduce participation. Furthermore, experts – scientists, attorneys and academics for example – with very detailed and specific comments are enduring the same challenges the rest of the world is dealing with in terms of employment interruption, family demands and health concerns. To open and close a public comment period when the public is preoccupied with issues of life and death would unfairly limit the participation of many people who have engaged on this issue for many years.

We urge you to direct staff to slow this process down. Thank you.