

# Opinion: Cut funding to TRPA

By Bruce Grego

As you are aware, on March 15, 2011, I attended a subcommittee meeting of the Nevada Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committee. My purpose was to express my views concerning future TRPA funding by the state of Nevada.

There were three matters on the agenda, one being considering funding of the TRPA for the next fiscal period. TRPA appeared through their executive director and supporting staff and they made their pitch for funding to support their quest for "protecting the lake."

After TRPA's presentation was made, the executive director and her staff left. After all scheduled presentations were made, which took approximately three hours, comments from the public were allowed.

I then made my presentation and asked the committee to withhold funding from TRPA until the bi-state Compact was changed so that the board members of TRPA were elected by the people in the basin. I explained, among other things, that local representation was token and that the local concerns have not been addressed by the TRPA. I indicated that TRPA policies contributed to the Angora Fire. I stated that land use has, with some limited exceptions, left our City of South Lake frozen with 1960s designs, when we need to compete with other recreational areas of more current designs and facilities. I stated that the TRPA was accountable to no one.

I also pointed out that even though the executive director for TRPA knew who I was, upon the completion of the TRPA presentation at the subcommittee, she and her staff left the committee, to my surprise, with little or no interest in my point of view.

To me, this only further emphasized TRPA's view that the local view and the local complaints about TRPA are irrelevant, and not worthy of their consideration. This incident reminds me of others.

First, last year, with the assistance of then City Manager David Jinkens, I sought to have our mayor present on the podium at the annual environment conference in August. We could not obtain permission despite the fact that senators organizing this conference were contacted, but no one from their staff would grant our request.

Second, our congressman, Tom McClintock, who spoke two years ago at this conference and mentioned the complaints he received from his constituency, was not invited to speak this last year.

Third, the Compact prevents locals from being appointed by state officials entitled to make appointment to the Board (Art III (1)(b) of the Compact).

The deck is stacked against us. Those that created TRPA and those that support its present form, want to be assured that the local views will not be considered, and that balanced regulations will not have to occur.

In short, TRPA is too secure, too smug in their views, and too isolated from democratic checks and balances to consider any opinions other than their own.

I am tired of seeing our local citizens seeking permits for simple projects only to have the permit process become complex and expensive. I am tired of hearing of excessive fines imposed by this agency. I am tired of seeing tax dollars spent on endless general plans and studies for the purpose of keeping those employed by the TRPA in perpetual employment. I am tired of seeing the imposition of their dogmatic philosophies, under the premise of "saving the lake". Most important, I am tired of seeing the total lack of

accountability as this agency continues to pile-on more and more regulations upon our local residents.

I think we deserve a new deal. We should not be asked to live in perpetual stagnation. Expanding families should be allowed to add an extra bedroom to their home, add a deck or even a hothouse (for summer flower and vegetable), even if their properties exceed currently land-coverage, for the cost of added improvements, and no more.

Businesses in our community should be able to repair or improve their properties, and change the footprint of their building, without fear and without paying tribute to the TRPA. New businesses should be encouraged to flourish by not having to face dramatic land coverage reductions of existing developed properties. Permits should be obtainable in days and not in years. The TRPA should allow exceptions to any land use regulations for ADA improvements, including allowing drive up windows for pharmacies and restaurants. TRPA needs to accept the automobile as the people's primary source of transportation and not compel us to use public transportation, if we do not want to.

Forty-two years of this agency's existence is too long, and life is too short to try to fix this agency. This agency does not get it and it never will.

Our time has come.

As you are no doubt now aware, on March 18, 2011, a bill in the Nevada Legislature has been introduced that calls for Nevada's withdrawal of the bi-state Compact, and is designated as SB 271. This is the most important portion of this bill. When either state of California or Nevada withdraws, the Compact is dissolved. The opportunity to end this bi-state Compact is too important to pass up.

I urge all citizens that have had enough of TRPA to actively support this bill, to go to Carson City and express their

support. This is our best opportunity in 42 years to push back and to hope that a better and fair solution to regional planning can be found. Just because TRPA has a choke hold on the Tahoe basin for so long, most of our citizens don't believe a change can happen. But it can.

Please contact me, if you are interested in fighting back. My email address is bgs1t@att.net.

*Bruce Grego is a member of the South Lake Tahoe City Council.*

*Publisher's note: Per Bruce Grego's request, this attached letter is what he gave to the Nevada Legislature.*

**BRUCE GREGO LETTER – TRPA**