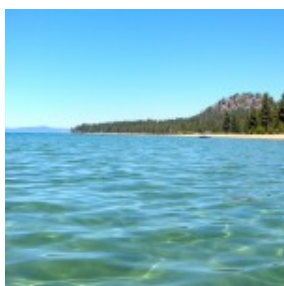


Bill to remove Nevada from TRPA moves to full Senate

By Anne Knowles

CARSON CITY – With two weeks left in the legislative session, a bill that would remove Nevada from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is finally making its way through the Legislature.

Senate Bill 271 is expected to move to the Senate soon for a full vote after several amendments to the legislation were approved by the Senate Government Affairs committee this morning. If passed by the Senate, the bill will move to the Assembly where it will be heard by the corresponding committee there.



Nevada is making progress in pulling out of the TRPA.
Photo/LTN file

The bill withdraws Nevada from the TRPA unless changes to the Compact outlined in the legislation are approved by Nevada and California lawmakers, and ratified by Congress. The withdrawal would take effect Oct. 1, 2013, unless extended by proclamation of the governor to Oct. 1, 2015.

The bill now calls for a report on the impact of exiting from the TRPA to be conducted by the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System. That report would be available to legislators next session, before any final decisions were made to leave the agency.

“There are plenty of places to stop (the process) if it proves to be problematic,” said state Sen. James Settelmeyer, R-Gardnerville, a sponsor of the bill and a member of the Senate Government Affairs committee, after the meeting.

Settelmeyer said he would not predict the bill’s chances of passage. Similar legislation has failed in the past.

The amendments proposed by the Senate Finance committee and approved by Senate Government Affairs include the oversight report looking into possible outcomes if Nevada leaves the current two-state agency. Other amendments that would alter the TRPA and need to be endorsed by California and Congress include removing the supermajority requirement for members voting on matters before the TRPA; a provision providing that anyone who challenges the regional plan has a burden of proof that it violate the Compact, and a requirement that the TRPA consider changing economic conditions so the plan does not adversely affect Lake Tahoe’s economy.

“If the economy improves, we can increase the environmental restrictions,” Settelmeyer said. “It can work to the environment’s benefit.”

If Nevada does leave the TRPA, an amendment to the bill provides that all projects previously approved by the TRPA would continue, or be grandfathered in.

The bill outlines the creation of the Nevada Regional Planning Agency should the state drop out of the existing agency now comprised of members from California and Nevada.