

STPUD ratepayer info to remain confidential

On a 4-1 vote, the South Tahoe Public Utility District board decided not to release ratepayer information to the Citizens Alliance for Responsible Government.



John Runnels, one of the most vocal members of the group, in January first approached the board about wanting addresses for water and sewer customers. The voted was pushed out to March 15 when all five board members would be present.

Runnels spoke at the meeting this week for the need to be able to deliver unbiased information to ratepayers, saying what comes from the district is tainted.

In particular Runnels and his group want to send info to ratepayers about Proposition 218 – the state law that mandates public utility districts notify customers when rates may be increasing. Such a notice will be in the mail to STPUD customers next week. Runnels has called the district's information proganda.

Also speaking at the meeting Thursday for the need to release the ratepayer info was John Cefalu. It was his son and board member Chris Cefalu who was the lone vote to release the data.

"The law requires that for an agency to release customer data they must make the finding that the public benefit must clearly outweigh the negative and the board could not make that finding," Dennis Cocking, South Tahoe PUD spokesman told *Lake Tahoe News*.

In the past Runnels had publicly stated the district intentionally provided misinformation. He was asked to provide

the documentation. He was unable to do so.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report