

Comment period on TRPA's Regional Plan update ends

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It's over. That would be the comment period for the draft environmental documents for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update.

On the final day – June 28 – 21 people spoke during the Governing Board meeting in Stateline. Two were opposed to the preferred alternative. About a dozen spoke at the Kings Beach meeting the day before.

Many who spoke and hundreds of others also put their thoughts in writing.

On Monday the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors was given an update by John Hester, TRPA planning director.

Supervisor Jack Sweeney chastised Hester a bit by saying TRPA is wrong to interchange the words clarity and quality when describing the waters of Lake Tahoe. Sweeney's example was how he had a spring on his property providing clear water that was of poor quality.

The supes also harped on TMDL, even though those requirements are from another agency – the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board.

“You have to convince me that more density doesn't make us have to pickup the cleaning tab at Lake Tahoe,” Supervisor Ron Briggs said.

Creating town centers is what TRPA's goal is so people walk more, while also getting current structures out of sensitive areas.

Hester responded, "Redevelopment has had a dramatic reduction on load and pollutants." The translation being that density would not be an economic hindrance.

TMDLs also came up Thursday. The EPA's Jack Landy wants some resolution on how the Regional Plan update will affect current law. Lahontan is an arm of the EPA, and while it only governs waters in California, the NDEPA is its Nevada counterpart and also reports to the EPA.

TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta said it's premature to know if that issue will be resolved before or after the RPU vote is taken in December.

Back at the supes meeting, Supervisor Ray Nutting said, "I think your thresholds are based on politics and not science."

To this, Hester said, "I don't disagree."

He explained to the supes how for the first time in the 40-plus history of the TRPA the agency had the threshold evaluations peer reviewed.

Hester and Supervisor Norma Santiago, who is also chair of the TRPA Governing Board, said the agency was told to look more closely at the thresholds, how information is gathered and were told some measures don't make sense.

On Thursday it was agreed to reconvene the TRPA's Regional Plan Update Committee so members can be working on the issues that were never resolved.

An October release of the final EIS is on the calendar, with board deliberations in November and a vote in December. However, there will be multiple meetings this summer where the board will discuss aspects of the Regional Plan update.

