

# **Opinion: Keep Nevada part of TRPA**

**By Jesse Patterson**

Nevada senators introduce bill to Save Lake Tahoe. Now, we have to make sure that it passes. Special interests who stand to benefit if Lake Tahoe loses its environmental protections will fight hard to stop this bill.

Nevada legislators need to hear from you. If you have not already done so, sign this petition to tell our elected officials that Lake Tahoe is for everyone, not just big money interests, and must be protected.

The Save Tahoe Bill, (SB229) introduced on March 11, will keep Nevada committed to the bi-state agreement that has protected Lake Tahoe for the last 40-plus years by completely repealing SB271, a bill that pulls Nevada out of all bi-state protections currently safeguarding Lake Tahoe.

SB271 was pushed through the Legislature in the last few minutes of the 2011 session and set a timetable for Nevada to leave the bi-state agreement in 2015. A promised environmental analysis looking at the impacts of this course of action has never materialized putting the future of Tahoe in jeopardy.

## **Why is repealing SB271 important?**

The lake needs a uniform regulator. Lake Tahoe is divided between two states but it does not know jurisdictional boundaries. Nor do the threats facing the lake. The two states must work together for the long-term protection of this unique national treasure.

## **Why does the lake need the TRPA?**

The TRPA regulates development uniformly on both sides of the

state line. The TRPA has stopped runaway urban sprawl and casino growth that threatened conservation lands. Tahoe's future is uncertain if the agency disintegrates.

The TRPA's successful boat inspection program has been the only defense against quagga and zebra mussels, which will cost millions to tackle if they establish. It only takes one mussel to destroy Lake Tahoe forever. We cannot take that chance.

The TRPA and its partners have secured hundreds of millions of dollars in federal restoration funds that have made a big difference at the lake. Our congressional leaders need to know that protecting and restoring the lake are top priorities for both states before they push for more investment. The bottom line is we aren't going to get more money if the two states act like squabbling siblings.

Join the League to Save Lake Tahoe, the Nevada Conservation League and thousands of others who care about the future of Lake Tahoe in supporting SB229.

If you haven't already done so, sign our petition. Or, email the members of the Nevada Senate on Natural Resources and ask them to vote YES on SB229.

Thank you for telling Nevada elected officials that Lake Tahoe should be protected for future generations.

*Jesse Patterson is deputy executive director of the League to Save Lake Tahoe.*