

Letter: A shared interest to improve Lake Tahoe

To the community,

It has been 17 years since President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore stood on the shores of Lake Tahoe and issued a challenge. They urged the frequently fractious perspectives in the region to come together in support of the restoration of Lake Tahoe. They incentivized their challenge with a renewed federal commitment to the Lake.

The states of California and Nevada, Washoe Tribe, regional agencies, local governments, business and community leaders, science community, and many residents and property owners responded to this challenge by shaping and supporting the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). Widely recognized as a national model, this innovative multi-sector approach to restoration continues to serve as a framework for the investments necessary to achieve and maintain adopted environmental threshold standards.

Community leaders with diverse perspectives remain committed to the EIP through the Lake Tahoe Partnership, a network of private sector entities, and community and nonprofit organizations that advocate in support of the EIP. The partnership works closely with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, state, federal, local government, and other partners to ensure a unified message as we seek federal, state, local and private funding.

During the period of 1997 through 2012, \$1.69 billion was invested in the EIP. Nearly 414 projects have been completed and 194 are in progress or currently in planning, including:

- Improving erosion control measures on 628 miles of roadways.

- Treating 54,248 acres of hazardous fuels.
- Restoring 15,896 acres of wildlife habitat, including 1,509 acres of stream environmental zones.
- Adding 2,579 linear feet of shoreline for public access.
- Creating 136 miles of bike and pedestrian routes.

Since 2009, the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program has conducted approximately 29,000 watercraft inspections, performed over 10,000 watercraft decontaminations, and treated more than 24 acres of weeds and Asian clam infestations in Lake Tahoe.

Last year, the collaborative commitment to Lake Tahoe was renewed again with adoption of the Regional Plan update. Thousands of people contributed ideas and feedback during the years of meetings, workshops, seminars, and public hearings that led to plan approval. The TRPA is implementing the plan update with widespread support from environmental and business groups, local governments, partner agencies, and the community at large. As part of this effort, California Gov. Jerry Brown and Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval demonstrated great leadership in recommitting their states to Lake Tahoe.

Recently, Sen. Dianne Feinstein introduced the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2013, cosponsored by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Sen. Dean Heller, and Sen. Barbara Boxer. This legislation renews the federal commitment to Lake Tahoe. As the largest land owner and manager at the Lake, the federal government's continued leadership and investment is essential to our collaboration.

We know it is our shared responsibility to help protect the unparalleled experiences Lake Tahoe offers, including public access to clean water, fresh air, healthy forests, mountains and streams, and pure drinking water. We understand that additional public and private investments are needed to

address new water clarity standards, threats from invasive species and catastrophic wildfire, and the challenge of improving near shore clarity. We recognize that Tahoe is a diverse community where people live, work, and recreate. It is and will remain a national and international destination. We can and should use this vision as a call to action to help protect the lake. Policies and plans must support the revitalization of Tahoe's economy, including the replacement of aging infrastructure built long before contemporary environmental regulations.

This in itself will achieve significant environmental benefits for the lake.

The Lake Tahoe Partnership embraces the updated vision for Lake Tahoe's protection that has emerged over recent years as we face the challenges of the 21st century. We are solution oriented and proud of our successful track record in support of the EIP. As we approach the 2013 Lake Tahoe Summit and Mr. Gore once again joins us, we renew our commitment to the shared responsibility of protecting one of America's most treasured, clear and pure lakes for current and future generations.

B Gorman, Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce

Darcie Goodman Collins, League to Save Lake Tahoe

Andrew Strain, Heavenly Mountain Resort

Amy R. Berry, Tahoe Fund

Steve Teshara, Sustainable Community Advocates

Sandy Evans Hall, North Lake Tahoe Chamber/VCB Resort Association

Nancy J. Gibson, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Bob Larsen, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Joanne Marchetta, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Cindy Gustafson, Tahoe City Public Utility District

Darrell Kizer, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Tom Greene, Tahoe Prosperity Center

Jim Lawrence, Nevada Division of State Lands

Carl Hasty, Tahoe Transportation District