

Letter: Fanny Bridge project a financial boondoggle

To the community,

As a member of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, an obligation exists to make ethical and justified decisions which are beneficial to the taxpayers of Placer County.

On April 29, I requested justification from the director, staff and board members of Placer County to provide the benefits to the taxpayers of Placer County for spending \$3.2 million and taking over the annual maintenance costs associated with Highway 89 and Fanny Bridge. This comes at a time when Placer County will face a \$4 million financial reduction in tax revenue resulting from continuing lower fuel sales. To date there has been no response or justification provided from Placer County.

Caltrans, like Placer County, is facing current and future reductions in highway funding. The recent Caltrans deputy directive shifts funding priorities from constructing new sections of highway to maintaining current highways. This may explain why Caltrans is not financially involved in the bypass project; however, Caltrans will be provided with an enhanced maintenance yard.

Placer County will also be responsible for funding the annual maintenance for items such as street lights, benches, landscaping and sidewalks. To date how the annual maintenance funds will be generated has never been disclosed to the business community. Currently our bike and pedestrian trails are closed for half of the year and the bus shelters are being maintained by nonprofit community organizations.

Members of the community have met with Sen. Dianne Feinstein's staff. The senator and her staff are reviewing the

environmental and financial impacts of the proposed project against the goals and objectives of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. Under the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, the environmental benefits must outweigh the project cost and impacts to the environment. The only gain for this project is shortening the travel distance for West Shore vehicles by approximately 200 yards. This minor gain does not outweigh the negative environmental and economical impacts. The proposed project with an estimated cost of \$33 million is believed to not be supported by the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.

The Placer County board is being pressured to support a project which resulted from a misleading and falsified funding application.

- Fanny Bridge was determined to be structurally sound.
- 400 bicyclists and pedestrians per hour was not surveyed at Fanny Bridge.
- There is no abnormal safety conditions. The pedestrian signal at Fanny Bridge provides a safe and controlled crossing.
- There have never been two-hour backups.
- The traffic congestion is through the commercial core, not at Fanny Bridge.

The Tahoe Transportation District stated, "It should be noted that some or all concepts delivered may not improve levels of service to levels normally considered acceptable." Why would Placer County spend \$3.2 million on a project that more than likely will not resolve the current conditions.

I request that the Placer County Board of Supervisors do what is ethical and vote against the current proposed project scope based on the unjustified expense to the taxpayers of Placer County. Let's first address the traffic problem which exists

through the commercial core.

Sincerely,

Jim Sajdak, Tahoe City