

# Letter: Lake Tahoe faces constant gridlock

To the community,

“Gridlock.” “Don’t leave your home.” “Stay off the roads.” Do any of these terms sound familiar to you?

As we observed this summer, with an improving economy comes the return of more traffic on our roadways. Yes, we want visitors to come enjoy Lake Tahoe and help support our local economy. But at the same time there is a risk of “Loving Tahoe to death.” More vehicles, pollution, crowding, and noise impact our environment, quality of life, and visitor experience. Proper planning is needed to ensure we don’t exceed what Tahoe can handle.

But are we already there? Several approved but not-yet-built projects will draw thousands more vehicles to the basin’s already congested roadways (i.e. Homewood Mountain Resort and Boulder Bay). At the same time, major population increases in California and Nevada will mean more people (think: millions more) living within just a few hours’ drive to Lake Tahoe. Extreme increases in greenhouse gases (GHGs) seem unavoidable. Unfortunately, TRPA, Placer County, and corporate developers continue to push for even more large developments in the region.

The pressure for significant growth in the Tahoe region threatens not only the health of Lake Tahoe and surrounding mountain areas, but also our quality of life and economy. Will future generations know what was so special about Lake Tahoe, or will they only see intermittent glimpses of a murky lake through large buildings, cluttered ridgelines, and glaring nighttime lights, all surrounded by a sea of vehicles? If we want to protect what is special about the West Shore and Lake

Tahoe, we can not sit idly by and let profit-driven developers call the shots. We need to get involved and demand better for our environment and community.

Sincerely,

**Susan Gearhart, president Friends of the West Shore**