

Letter: SLT needs to keep banning plastic bags

Publisher's note: *This letter was sent to South Lake Tahoe City Council and is reprinted with permission. The council meets Dec. 7 at 9am with the plastic bag ban on the agenda.*

Dear City of South Lake Tahoe Council Members,

I am strongly opposed to the possible repeal on single use plastic bags for small businesses in South Lake Tahoe. It is a bad solution in search of a problem that does not exist.



Rosie and John
Friedrich

The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce has repeatedly communicated to the council that the 70 percent or more of its small business members support the plastic bag ban. People in the community have largely embraced the ban, which has helped our community reduce waste and demonstrate our environmental awareness and commitment. Rarely are businesses, environmental organizations and the community so aligned on any issue.

So it's puzzling to understand on what basis the council is proposing to move backward on this issue. Before voting in favor of such a regressive move, the council needs to demonstrate the data that justifies such a decision. Have businesses been systematically surveyed to assess the impact of the program? Is there any other data that has been gathered

to justify the proposed repeal? If not, it would appear to be motivated by the personal opinions of certain council members, and not on a measured assessment of the desires, or best interests, of our community. Which constituents would be served by voting to flood Tahoe with more plastic waste?

Finally, I can't imagine worse timing for considering a vote to degrade our environment. Right now, a large California delegation is in Paris, helping lead the push for a strong climate agreement by highlighting California's example that environmental protection and economic growth go hand in hand. It's unfathomable that the governing body of one of the treasures of California, and the world, could meanwhile vote to undo protection of our fragile environment. What kind of message would that send to our visitors who expect Tahoe to be on the cutting edge, not tail, of solutions.

Please keep the plastic bag ban in place, and instead, join the hundreds of cities across California and the U.S. that are moving forward with strong commitments to help protect our planet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Friedrich, South Lake Tahoe