

# Editorial: Vote no on Measure T

**Publisher's note: *The following endorsement is from Lake Tahoe News after a team of seven community members gathered to discuss Measure T.***

It was in 1911 that California became the 10th state to offer the initiative process to voters. Now 24 states allow initiatives on the ballot.

At the state level it has evolved into a business where companies – for a price – will gather signatures, provide legal oversight, consulting and even campaign for the cause. In California it's big business. The Nov. 8 state ballot has 17 statewide initiatives.

A variety of reasons exist for people to want to use the initiative process. The basic reason is to get a topic before the voters that the electeds can't or won't address. It's also a way to circumvent the normal legislative process.

At the local level it is still very much a grass-roots process.

South Lake Tahoe voters next month will be asked a question about the loop road that was brought forward by a group of citizens who are against the project. The goal of Measure T would be to force the city to go back to the voters once a preferred alternative is chosen to ask them to vote yes or no on the loop road.

Writing the rebuttal to the initiative were Steve Teshara, as interim CEO of Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce – though he is also the chair of the Tahoe Transportation District board, and Sharon Kerrigan, executive director of the South Lake Tahoe Board of Realtors. Their argument has more to

do with why they like the loop road than whether the voters should have a voice, or even anything to do with the actual ballot question.

While the bulk of the project would be in the city limits, the Stateline casinos would also be impacted. Both state transportation departments would be involved and the feds are the lead because this is a project spearheaded by the Tahoe Transportation District. Really, anyone who ever drives Highway 50 through the South Shore would be affected if this project goes through. The proposal is to take the highway behind Harrah's and MontBleu, then turn the current highway from about Pioneer Trail to Lake Parkway into a city-county street.

The project is complex and is more than just rerouting a road. But the merits of the project are not what Measure T is about.

Measure T would bind the hands of the city when it comes to staff and electeds being able to do their jobs. We have a problem with that. We need to allow our elected representatives to do just that – represent us when it comes to the loop road and the sundry of other issues.

That is why it's important to have people on all elected bodies who represent your beliefs, why it's important to make your beliefs known to the electeds and to the public, and why being engaged early and not just at the eleventh-hour is important.

By saying no to Measure T *Lake Tahoe News* is not taking a stance on the loop road itself. Nor would the voters.

We are saying no to Measure T because it is poorly worded, is open to litigation, has and will continue to cost the city (which is the taxpayers) money that could be spent for better uses, it's a waste of time, and the ultimate outcome is meaningless. If it passes, there will be a court hearing Dec. 5 to address the lawsuit brought to stop Measure T.

If Measure T is upheld by the court and therefore a special election would be required down the road, at a minimum that would cost the city \$10,000.

And while money should not be the overriding reason not to pursue one's beliefs, the cost involved in terms of real dollars and time spent is a waste with no benefit to the residents of South Lake Tahoe.

We say this because even if Measure T passes and the next question is a direct yes or no to the loop road, it won't matter. TTD and the state transportation agencies can do what they want without the city's blessing.

For those wanting to stop the loop road, it would be better to lobby the individual members of the TTD board, get in front of the people who have the money, and go to the state transportation agencies.