

Letter: Stop perpetuating us vs. them

To the community,

Duane [Wallace] “as one president to another” I’d hope your experience would tell you the professional way to introduce yourself to someone is not by insulting them. In your **Nov. 5 letter** your statement, “We locals, built this town when you were in college” is extremely arrogant and epitomizes one of the biggest challenges our community faces ... the inability to let go of the past. It has and continues to hamper efforts to attract human and financial capital and perpetuates the us vs. them mentality. I’d encourage you to recognize that many in this community, beyond you and whoever you define as your club of “locals” have taken risks to invest in this community and support our local businesses on both sides of the state line.

As an example, my family and I live in California, own property in the city and have multiple business interests on the South Shore including in Nevada and in the city. As with many of my colleagues and members of the Tahoe Chamber, we recognize the South Shore’s interconnected economy and need things to improve so we can expand our businesses, provide more living wage jobs and support our local schools and infrastructure. That is why the Tahoe Future 2020 Vision was created by the Tahoe Chamber and why it is the basis of key decisions, endorsements and direction for our organization and membership.

You make a number of other claims and accusations in your letter which need to be addressed. First, your claim of 1,600 members prior to the merger is significantly misleading. Given your involvement in the chamber at the time you are very aware that those numbers were inflated. Many entities had multiple chamber memberships from the same business. This is no longer

a standard of practice in the industry.

Second, the Tahoe Chamber Independent Expenditure Committee raised money from the South shore community (California and Nevada) to support candidates who will best represent the interests of the business community and work toward the Tahoe Future 2020 vision for our interconnected economy and community. It is insulting to all our membership, but particularly our California members to purposely mislead the community suggesting otherwise.

Third, "Did Californians sue Nevada's over ballot measures?" Accusing Nevada of suing California over Measure T and insinuating the Tahoe Chamber and the Tahoe Chamber IEC were involved is baseless, inappropriate and completely unprofessional. It is particularly disturbing coming from someone in a leadership position at a local business organization and an elected board member of a local utility district. Once again neither the Tahoe Chamber nor the Tahoe Chamber IEC have been involved in any aspect of the Measure T lawsuit. As you are aware, the lawsuit was filed by a California resident on behalf of many in the community who feel disenfranchised by a ballot measure which proposes to take away governance powers of those City Council members they voted for.

Duane, I'd be happy on behalf of the Tahoe Chamber, our members and for the betterment of the community to sit down and identify how we can work together to improve our economy and build a sustainable community. I say this hoping you come with more professionalism and respect for my organization and myself than you demonstrated in your letter.

Jason Drew, Tahoe Chamber board of directors chair