

Tahoe boat inspection fees set; could change in future

By Kathryn Reed

Fees will stay the same for boaters getting inspections before they launch at Lake Tahoe this year.

The cost of the program is split 50-50 by the boater and the states. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency oversees the program.

At the Governing Board meeting last month Austin Sass, who represents South Lake Tahoe on the board, brought up the idea of making the program self-sustaining. This wasn't the first time he has done so. This time, though, a few more board members expressed some interest in exploring the idea.

"Boating is a luxury. Why are we underwriting boaters?" Sass asked.

He said it could be a gradual easing of subsidies.

Matt Driscoll, TRPA staff member making the presentation, explained how the inspection program is part of the environmental improvement program. The EIP by nature is a public-private partnership.

Board member Shelley Aldean wondered if there would be less compliance if the fees were dramatically increased.

Clem Shute, another board member, pointed out how the governorships in California and Nevada will be changing this year, and wondered if support for the states would be continuing.

"There is no guarantee the \$375,000 will be there. We may not get that money. We need to anticipate the possibility of not getting that money," Schute said.

Executive Director Joanne Marchetta said a logical time to discuss the fees will be when the draft environmental impact statement for the shoreline is released later this year.