

Letter: Keep pressure on El Dorado County

To the community,

Cannot tell you how much **your article** on media access means to me and a host of other living in ED Hills, Serrano. You hit that nail squarely on the head. There is a pending lawsuit as of April 17, but access to us has been limited these past four years.

I and others have been threatened on social media sites for commenting about concerns for the HOA well before the suit.

I write this because I posted two comments regarding this and one disappeared, not the one I deleted. I am hoping that you will not let the “lawsuit pending” club dampen your ardor for representing the public’s best interests.

Respectfully,

Merrilee Posner, El Dorado Hills

Letter: Kings Beach event center deal a bad idea

To the community,

After 1.5 years of negotiations with the developer Laulima, the North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD) board has voted to pursue a 70-year lease – really a sale – of our community’s free and clear lakefront venue, North Tahoe Event

Center.

The lease states that Laulima can sublet or assign to any of their other managers or members without NTPUD approval. In January 2017 Laulima Northstar LLC was formed. Wow, you know where this is going.

After the lease is signed and the community is contractually on the hook, the NTPUD will finally find out what Laulima's plans are and if they have adequate financing. A little late there. I thought that was what they were doing for 18 months.

When asked what would happen if Laulima defaulted, NTPUD answered, "We'd get it back." I bet the lenders on the CalNeva had the same hopes, but that isn't how it works litigation and bankruptcy-wise.

We just got the 37 page lease Friday evening and the first public meeting is Aug. 23 at 5:30pm at the North Tahoe Event Center.

The NTPUD is fast tracking this awful scheme. Please come and voice your concerns. The final board vote to approve hasn't happened yet.

See the lease [online](#).

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Opinion: EDC thwarting media's access

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County is getting petty and personal – and *Lake Tahoe News* isn't going to take it anymore. We are done being silent.

El Dorado County has an image problem. El Dorado County says one thing (that it wants to be transparent) and does another (cuts off access). El Dorado County is void of effective leadership.

The citizenry needs to start paying attention. What is going on in Placerville – or not as the case may be – does affect Lake Tahoe. It may seem like a world away, but decisions being made by staff and electeds roll down Echo Summit to the basin.

It was only three years ago the **grand jury said**, “Early in its term, the grand jury began to see a thread of dysfunction running through El Dorado County government.”

It seems to be a systemic problem.

The county came up with a strategic plan that appears to have been an exercise in futility, or a gesture to look good. The residents are the losers in this game.

The county of late has become more insular. Transparency has been replaced by a guard dog.

El Dorado County CAO Don Ashton doesn't want the media talking directly to county employees, which might be why planning chief Roger Trout didn't return a call about the Meyers gas station project. However, Trout is who Supervisor Sue Novasel and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency directed *LTN* to. The media is supposed to go to the recently hired flack. When asked about the gas station, public information officer Carla Hass in an email on Aug. 18 said, “The county hasn't received any application or notification for an intent to reopen the gas station.”

Clearly, that is wrong based on **today's lead story**.

Ashton told *Lake Tahoe News* that Hass is new and isn't expected to know everything. No one knows everything, but a competent PIO knows where to get the answers. It isn't like she is right out of college, and she's worked in government before. Maybe the blame shouldn't be on Hass, but on her boss. That would be Ashton.

Ashton in a conversation with *Lake Tahoe News* on Aug. 21 essentially vomited all over the publication and various people who write for it. We have thick skin, and are used to scrutiny, rude comments and angry diatribes. What isn't called for is nasty, unwarranted attacks, especially from someone of Ashton's stature.

Whatever happened to civil discourse?

He thinks headlines should not reflect the tenor of a column if he disagrees with the column. He doesn't understand that a column is that one person's opinion. This isn't something unique to *Lake Tahoe News*.

He thinks a reporter should not expect questions to immediately be answered that were generated from a press release that his PIO sent out. (The point of a press release is to get media to write a story; and there is a contact name-number on it for questions.)

He said staff doesn't like working with a certain *LTN* reporter because she asks too many questions. I laughed. Asking questions is the media's job. He said staff is too busy to answer them. This last round happened to be questions related to that press released the flack sent.

He thinks the county should be able to vet stories before they see the light of day. I told him no reputable publication would do that. He said the *LA Times* let him read stories before publication. I told him I didn't believe him. He said it's true because he had a relationship with that reporter. I still don't believe him.

He thinks press releases should be published verbatim. He is wrong.

The Society of Professional Journalists, which I belong to, has a code of ethics. It includes:

- The highest and primary obligation of ethical journalism is to serve the public.
- Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable. Give voice to the voiceless.
- Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs and government. Seek to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all.
- Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers, donors or any other special interests, and resist internal and external pressure to influence coverage.

I live by these standards and expect those who work for *Lake Tahoe News* to do the same. It would be great if El Dorado County came up with a code of conduct or ethics and actually lived by them.

I think a good PIO can do wonders for an agency. On a regular basis I work with ones who are outstanding. We respect each other and the jobs we each have.

This isn't about PIOs.

This is about a county that is sinking further into an abyss.

A PIO can do many things. One is to help get the truth to the people. The media is that conduit between an agency and the public. Another thing a PIO can do is put his/her agency's

spin on that truth. It's up to the media to discard the spin and keep the facts.

Ashton seems to think the media works for the county. He's mistaken. *Lake Tahoe News* does not work for any public agency or even any paid advertiser (sometimes those are one in the same).

We will continue to seek the truth and report our findings. El Dorado County can put up roadblocks, but we intend to plow through them.

Kathryn Reed is the publisher of Lake Tahoe News.

Opinion: Summit to shine light on Tahoe's challenges

By Dianne Feinstein and Joanne Marchetta

Twenty-one years ago, President Bill Clinton came to Lake Tahoe to announce a major environmental restoration effort. That first Lake Tahoe Summit launched an unprecedented public-private partnership that has since invested more than \$2 billion to save the lake.

Over two decades, through the environmental improvement program, the Tahoe partnership has created one of the nation's most ambitious and successful environmental restoration and conservation programs. In fact, according to Lake Tahoe scientists, had this partnership not formed, lake clarity could be nearly 20 feet worse than it is today.

While the lake and its forests are healthier now from this work, we must double-down on our effort in the face of threats

from climate change.

Earlier this month, the Tahoe Environmental Research Center at UC Davis released its annual report on the state of Lake Tahoe. The report is a clarion call-to-action for all who love this lake.

While the report makes it clear our investments are having a positive effect, climate change is having a profound impact on the Lake Tahoe Basin. Climate change is also making the existing challenges in the Tahoe basin harder to address.

One of the most notable effects of climate change is the rising temperature of the lake. Surface temperatures are rising at half a degree each year—14 times faster than the historical average. We know that rising temperatures make it easier for algae to grow.

Partners around Tahoe are reducing stormwater pollution that harms lake clarity and helps fuel algae growth. Over the last five years, we have reduced clarity-harming fine sediment pollution by 12 percent, and reduced phosphorus and nitrogen pollution, nutrients that spur algae growth, by 8.5 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

That's more than 268,500 pounds of fine sediment that is no longer washing into the lake each year. This important work to protect and restore Lake Tahoe's clarity and keep Tahoe blue must not only continue, it must accelerate to protect the lake's water quality from climate change.

The problems aren't only in the water. Lake Tahoe is experiencing longer summer seasons, affecting the delicate ecosystems around the lake. The hot summer season has increased by 26 days over the last 50 years.

Longer, hotter summers and more severe droughts are killing trees around the lake at an alarming rate. The U.S. Forest Service estimates there are 136,000 dead trees in the Tahoe

basin. While we've made progress thinning forests and removing the overabundance of fuel for forest fires, drought and climate change continue to stress Tahoe's forests. We must do more to improve the health and resilience of Tahoe's forests and prepare our communities for wildfire.

Climate change is happening now, and we must act.

Facing a seemingly impossible challenge 20 years ago, this community came together to save the lake. We believe we can again.

Of course, addressing climate change will require a global effort. But with all our success over the last two decades, the world already looks to Lake Tahoe as proof that environmental change for the better is possible. This is our opportunity to continue to lead on an international stage.

We must keep working together to solve the problems of climate change—not just globally but right here in Lake Tahoe. We must strike at the heart of the issues detrimental to the lake.

This is going to require continued and increased focus on forest management and wildfire preparedness, the control—if not eradication—of invasive species, and finding more ways of reducing the amount of nutrients flowing into the lake.

Transportation is another key issue we must address. Car emissions threaten air and water quality. We can reduce that traffic by expanding public transportation and biking options.

Just like two decades ago, the federal government is ready to help with those efforts. Last year, we passed the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, which reauthorizes \$415 million of federal funding over the next seven years to fund programs vital to the lake's health.

This is an important commitment, but only one piece of the puzzle. Tomorrow, we will hold the 21st Lake Tahoe Summit at

the Tallac Historic Site on the South Shore. All four senators from California and Nevada will be joined by supporters of the lake from the public and private sector, including representatives from the federal, state and local levels of government. Our keynote address will be delivered by former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, who served under Clinton during the first summit.

The summit will be a chance to celebrate all we've accomplished to restore Lake Tahoe. It will also be a chance for the public-private partnership formed 20 years ago to re-commit its efforts towards solving the problems created by climate change.

Tahoe is ready to meet this new challenge. We hope you will join us.

Dianne Feinstein is a Democratic senator from California and Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Opinion: Why Calif. has the nation's highest poverty level

By Dan Walters, CalMatters

With all the recent hoopla about California's record-low unemployment rate and the heady prospect of its becoming No. 5 in global economic rankings, it is easy to lose sight of another salient fact: It is the nation's most poverty-stricken state.

So says the U.S. Census Bureau in its “supplemental measure” of poverty that is a far more accurate than the traditional measure because it takes into account not only income, but living costs.



Dan Walt

By the measure, just over 20 percent of Californians are living in poverty. The Public Policy Institute of California has devised its own measure, similar to the Census Bureau’s, that not only validates the 20 percent figure, but tells us that another 20 percent of Californians are in “near-poverty,” which means they struggle to pay for food, shelter and other necessities of life.

Another indicator of California’s impoverishment is that more than a third of its 39 million residents are enrolled in Medi-Cal, the state-federal program of medical care for the poor. And that doesn’t count a few million more who cannot legally obtain Medi-Cal coverage because they are undocumented immigrants.

Finally, 60 percent of California’s 6 million K-12 students are either “English-learners” or come from poor families, thus qualifying their schools for additional state support aimed at improving their academic achievements.

Two new reports not only underscore California’s economic stratification, but point to its underlying factors.

One comes from the Tax Foundation and delves into the sharp differences in cost-of-living by comparing what \$100 buys in

each state.

It would have \$115 in relative purchasing power in Mississippi, which has the nation's lowest overall living costs, but just \$84 in Hawaii, which has the highest. California, unfortunately, is much closer to Hawaii than to Mississippi at \$88, the 47th highest.

Our soaring housing costs are one factor. It's not unusual for a low-income family to pay more than 50 percent of its income for housing, if it can find it. California has very high automotive fuel prices and utility rates, which weigh heavily on the state's poor, particularly the so-called "working poor" who don't qualify for many public benefits.

The second new report comes from Wallet Hub, a personal economics website, which tapped a variety of data, such as high school graduation rates and college degree holders, to determine the education levels of the nation's 150 largest metropolitan areas.

Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan, is No. 1 and university communities are generally bunched near the top, but the San Jose area, the seat of California's high-tech industry, is No. 3 and the San Francisco-Oakland region is No. 8.

Other California metropolitan areas string out below, but the most startling revelation is that the bottom 10 – the nation's least educated communities – include five from California, Salinas (144), Fresno (145), Modesto (146), Bakersfield (147) and Visalia-Porterville (148).

If one takes the Wallet Hub rankings for California and places them next to a chart of personal incomes in the state's 58 counties, there is a strong correlation. The higher their education rankings, the higher their incomes, and vice versa.

Direct efforts to relieve poverty via raising minimum wages,

providing an earned income tax credit and expanding other public benefits certainly have marginal effects. But the latest reports indicate that in the long run, holding down costs for housing and other living costs, making education more available and effective, and encouraging private investment in more and better jobs are vital if California is to escape the ignominy of having the nation's highest level of poverty.

Opinion: SLTPD enforcing no dog rules at parks

By Brian Uhler

Many South Lake Tahoe residents love their dogs. Most police officers love dogs, too. I've heard it said by someone not so long ago, "The more people I meet, the more I love dogs!"

We at the police department understand and share in this fondness. However, we receive weekly complaints from community members regarding dogs in public parks, and most frequently dogs at the Live at Lakeview events.



Brian Uhler

The South Lake Tahoe City Code does not allow dogs, even on a

leash, to be in our public parks. Police officers have been asking people for voluntary compliance with this regulation and, for the most part, people are appreciative of the “soft” approach and comply. Others respond with agitation and anger, some even feel singled out.

Officers are not singling anyone out. Every person with a dog in a park is presumed to be in violation of SLTCC section 8.05.130 and should be contacted. After an officer makes contact and establishes an exemption under the law, the citizen is considered compliant.

Service animals: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a service animal is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. The task(s) performed by the animal must be directly related to the person’s disability. Proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal is not required under the law. Those with service animals must be in control of the animal at all times.

Protections for those with disabilities: The ADA and California law respects and protects individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities shall be entitled to full and equal access to places of public accommodation, including but not limited to public parks. The law also extends civil penalties to individuals who interfere with these protections.

Other support dogs: Emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not service dogs under the ADA and do not provide the individual with an exemption to the city’s restriction against dogs in the parks. We believe many people have a misunderstanding about this and this leads to further public confusion. The last thing we really want is an extended debate about the nuance of the law with people in the public.

Fake service dog issue: Lying about the legitimacy of a

service dog undermines the public perception and acceptance of valid service dogs and the disable persons who truly need those dogs to assist them. There are individuals and organizations that sell service animal certification or registration documents online, these documents do not convey “rights” under the ADA and the Department of Justice does not recognize these documents as proof that a dog is a service animal. The California Penal Code protects owners of legally recognized service animals by including a prohibition against fraudulent representations of a guide, signal, or service dog. The penalty for this crime includes jail time of up to six months and a fine of up to \$1,000, as well as an administrative citation and fine for violation of SLTCC section 8.05.130.

SLTPD investigation: When a person brings a dog to a public park and/or the Live at Lakeview event, she or he should expect to be asked: (1) is the animal required because of a disability?, and (2) what task or job is the animal trained to perform? If the answers to these questions are insufficient under the law, the patron will be asked to remove the dog from the park and/or be cited.

Possible change to the law: City leaders always value insights from the community we serve. Not all cities have a prohibition against dogs in parks. Some allow dogs on leashes, but also require dog owners to pick up dog feces. Perhaps the public could express their preferences on this issue so those with the authority to make change could do so in a way which best represents the public we serve.

Brian Uhler is the police chief in South Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: The Apocalypse in San Juan Bautista

By Joe Mathews

If the apocalypse comes to California, I'll be ready. After all, I've been to San Juan Bautista.

This summer I visited the San Benito County town, which has centuries of experience with the ending of worlds, as Armageddon drew closer than ever. North Korean missiles can reach California. The American president has the nuclear codes and no impulse control. State-sized icebergs break off Antarctica.



Joe Mathews

In California, this moment seems especially apocalyptic. Our governor routinely thunders that unmitigated climate change will make the planet uninhabitable soon. Huge fires rage from Yosemite to Modoc. Even if we somehow survive natural and man-made apocalypse, Elon Musk says robots will just inherit the world anyway.

In these scary times, a small, out-of-the-way place like San Juan Bautista—with fewer than 2,000 people, just off the 101 between Gilroy and Salinas—might seem like an escape. But no California place is more haunted by visions of apocalypse—historically, seismically, cinematically.

Armageddon and the town come together in the most famous local structure, the Mission San Juan Bautista, the 15th of the 21 California missions. It is distinguished by its size—it was the largest mission—and its movie fame, as the setting of the most terrifying scenes of Alfred Hitchcock's "Vertigo."

At the mission, I walked into the Guadalupe Chapel, where the Rev. Alberto Cabrera was saying Mass and singing all the verses of "Amazing Grace," including "The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, / The sun forbear to shine; / But God, who called me here below, / Will be forever mine."

The hymn put me in mind of the apocalyptic story of California's Indians, and their deaths by the thousands, mostly from disease. The mission period saw a decline in the state's native population from 300,000 to 250,000; it collapsed even further after the U.S. conquest, from 150,000 in 1850 to 30,000 a quarter-century later.

This history feels alive in San Juan Bautista. Descendants of decimated local tribes have raised the topic so consistently that Bishop Richard Garcia of Monterey gave a Mass at the mission in 2012, asking for forgiveness for the sins committed against Native Americans in California. Less than a half-mile from the mission, El Teatro Campesino has built a national reputation with diverse works, some of which look back at Mission Indians as well as the Aztec and Mayan civilizations, which suffered their own catastrophes.

For all the weight of past apocalypses, looming destructions are plainly visible at San Juan Bautista. After walking through the mission cemetery, I encountered a U.S. Geological Survey marker noting what lies beneath the mission: the San Andreas Fault. For more than 200 years, the fault has damaged parts of the mission. A major retrofit is being planned for next year, but can the mission stand at this dangerous spot for another 200 years?

From the fault, I walked across the grassy plaza, bordered by preserved buildings in a state historical park. Among the structures is the Castro-Breen Adobe, named half in honor of Patrick Breen, the Irish immigrant who, with his wife and seven children, joined the Donner Party, and lived to tell the tale.

The square is instantly recognizable to movie buffs. Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak run across it twice in "Vertigo." Each of those scenes ends with a different blonde woman seemingly falling to her death from the mission tower. The church had no tower when Hitchcock filmed in San Juan Bautista 50 years ago—the one you see in the movie is a Hollywood special effect.

But those cinematic falls in San Juan Bautista, have made "Vertigo" a document for contemplating the fall of humanity. One great philosopher of our age, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, a Frenchman who teaches at Stanford and is close to Gov. Jerry Brown, has written that the movie inspired his own career as "an enlightened doomsayer" who developed "a metaphysics of the age of catastrophe that awaits us."

Dupuy devotes the epilogue of his masterful book, "The Mark of The Sacred," to "Vertigo's" complicated plot, and especially to how Stewart's character allows himself to be twice deceived by Novak's character, only realizing the peril after it's too late.

In this, Dupuy sees humanity's failure to recognize how close we are to the apocalypse. The apocalypse, Dupuy writes, is nothing like death, which is part of life. The apocalypse presents us with the greater horror of nothingness. If humanity ends, it will be as if all the people who came before—Alfred Hitchcock, the Donner Party, or California Indians—had never existed.

To save ourselves, Dupuy argues, we must treat the apocalypse

as inevitable, stare as deeply as possible into the abyss, so that we inspire ourselves to avoid falling in.

So, please, visit the apocalypse as soon as possible. San Juan Bautista is nigh.

Joe Mathews writes the Connecting California column for Zócalo Public Square.

Opinion: Nevada proves renewable energy is reliable

By Jason Geddes, Reno Gazette-Journal

As every Nevadan knows, our state sees a lot of sunshine. What is news to some, however, is how we've increasingly used that natural resource to our advantage by adding significant amounts of solar power to the state's energy mix.

And with recent cost declines – 85 percent since 2009 – solar is now frequently generating cost savings, in addition to helping make our state's electricity production cleaner.

That's why I was surprised to read a few months ago that the U.S. Department of Energy was commencing a study on whether or not the recent shift away from traditional baseload power sources (such as coal) to more renewable energy threatened the reliability of our nation's electricity grid. However, a draft of the study reported on last month confirmed exactly what I've seen in my own experience tracking renewable energy for Nevada: no issues with reliability.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Federal lands need to be in public domain

By Nicholas Kristof, New York Times

This will make me sound grouchy and misanthropic, but I sometimes wonder if what makes America great isn't so much its people as its trees and mountains.

In contrast to many advanced countries, we have a vast and spectacular publicly owned wilderness, mostly free and available to all. In an age of inequality, the affluent have gated neighborhoods, private schools, backup generators and greater influence on elected officials. But our most awe-inspiring wild places have remained largely a public good to be shared by all, a bastion of equality.

My family and I have been backpacking on the Pacific Crest Trail through the Sierra north of Donner Pass, enjoying magnificent splendor that no billionaire is allowed to fence off. We all have equal access, at no charge: If you can hold your own against mosquitoes and bears, the spot is yours for the night.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Rafters, not

taxpayers need to foot the bill

By Larry Weitzman

El Dorado County has a competent deputy chief administrative officer and former chief budget officer working in our administration, Laura Schwartz. She understands cash flow, spending and overall, she is pretty smart.

I understand she has a master's degree in accounting. Darn good credentials. In fact, about the only thing I remember from my psychology 1A class was a chart listing the highest IQ of all professions and accountants were ranked No. 1. Of course, you can probably now guess my major in undergraduate school.



Larry Weitzman

But—and don't you love "buts" because here it comes—at the Aug. 10 Planning Commission meeting when discussing item No. 5 regarding the new updated River Management Plan (RMP), I thought Schwartz had morphed into Nancy Pelosi, when she said, "We need to pass the RMP before we do a financial analysis of its impact." Pelosi said an almost identical statement when she said, "We need to pass Obamacare to see what's in it."

Are you kidding me? What was the name of that turnip truck I just fell off? Of course, in spite of the objections of certain members of the public who even presented information

as to the preliminary sheriff's costs relative to the river totaling about \$1 million, there was no analysis or method within the plan of how to recover these taxpayers' costs. Yet, the entire Planning Commission approved the RMP recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the RMP "as is."

I don't want to waste "the ink" telling you who the commissioners are who serve at the pleasure of the board. Understand that RMP appears to have been crafted by mostly the commercial rafting industry here in EDC as there are no provisions for cost recovery to the county for costs their industry creates. Sounds like the tail may be wagging the dog.

In fact, one of the ringleaders, Nate Rangel, **in his column** and in his appeal to the Planning Commission at the hearing to pass this updated RMP, attempted to counter facts that with respect to their approximately \$30,000 grant for shuttle buses, the money doesn't come from EDC, but comes from some state or local government environmental grant. Hello! Can anybody tell me where any government money comes from? How about grants, paychecks, pensions, police cars, road repairs, Delta tunnels, and high-speed rail? It comes from one place and one place only—the taxpayers. All Rangel is saying in his obfuscation of the facts is that the shuttle buses are essentially being paid for by different taxpayers, but paying just the same.

What the Planning Commission has done is similar to going to the board of directors at a bank with a business model but with no financial data. Here is our new plan to build a widget factory. It will be the best widget factory ever. Trust us. Just look at the drawings, equipment and factory buildings. But the board will ask the big question before showing them the door. You want our money to finance this monstrosity, right? Well how much is it going to cost? How are you going to pay for it? And how will you pay us back for the money you want?

That's exactly what's going on here. If the Planning Commission were a bank, the depositors would lose everything as it would go broke in a nanosecond. But we are dealing with government here, they don't care about money because it is always "other people's money" – your money and my money – never their own money. But the Planning Commission can't think that deep.

The first things anyone with any brains asks of a new proposition is how much is it going to cost, and how are we going to pay for it? What happens to people when they get into government? Do they all lose their common "cents?" That's just not in EDC, it's problematic in all governments.

Not only did the Planning Commission fail to ask these most important questions, they failed to even ascertain one iota of information relative to costs. I did ask some questions and received incredibly quick answers from someone in the know. While they admittedly were good guesstimates, some of the numbers was quite accurate; however, further studies need to be done from the law enforcement, emergency response and public safety perspective. I was advised that information will be forthcoming as soon as EDC's new computer system gets up and running. We also have no idea about code enforcement, another huge (cost) issue along the river, and that includes continuing violations of many concessionaire's special use permits. Inquiring minds want to know, but unfortunately none of these minds reside in the EDC administration and/or the Planning Commission members.

You may hear things like "We have a river trust fund." Well give the taxpayers and other concerned individuals an accounting. It isn't called a trust fund for nothing. And they may claim they already pay fees for this and that. Well tell us how much the total is? And they claim they bring ancillary business to the county. Well let's cut through the chase on that one. All businesses do that especially hotels and motels who already pay a 10 percent transit occupancy tax. The

argument of the rafters that they make money for the county just doesn't hold water.

When is this incompetence going to end? Or the free ride of the commercial rafters and the businesses who operate on special use permits going to end? They need to be paying for the costs of their river use, not the taxpayers.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.