

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 1, 2013

Mr. Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club
85 2nd Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Brune,

As the Sierra Club weighs important decisions about next steps following the recent adoption of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA) Regional Plan Update (RPU), we would like to share our perspective and urge you to refrain from any actions that might result in the dissolution of the bi-state compact or setback our efforts to pass legislation to help restore lake clarity.

As you know, the States of California and Nevada have worked diligently over the past year and a half to complete the plan update, which was approved by TRPA's Governing Board on December 12, 2012. The adoption of the plan is the result of nearly a decade of work by TRPA, local government, residents, business owners and environmental groups and takes into account more than 5,000 public comments. The plan reflects policy compromises of this diverse group of stakeholders with the overarching goal of restoring Lake Tahoe's world-famous clarity while at the same time supporting desperately needed revitalization.


Given the bi-state cooperation involved in reaching compromise on the plan, any delays to its implementation could have far-reaching effects, including jeopardizing the bi-state compact that established TRPA. This compact, which was first ratified by Congress in 1969, is vital to the preservation of Lake Tahoe. If either state were to withdraw from the compact, as proposed under existing Nevada state law, the decades-long investment we have collectively made in Lake Tahoe's restoration would be undermined.

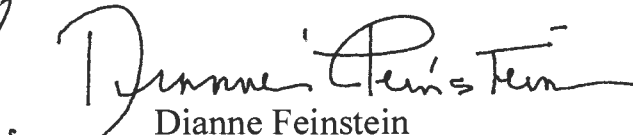
Additionally, delayed implementation of the Regional Plan would risk further deterioration of the Lake's ecosystem by stymieing needed investment in environmental projects. More than \$521 million in federal funding has been dedicated to Tahoe Basin restoration since 1997. In order to secure future funding, it is imperative that Congress reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, legislation on which we would welcome the Sierra Club's input. However, we urge you not to take any steps which might foster the misperception that California and Nevada disagree on Lake Tahoe restoration plans, undermining our bipartisan legislation and jeopardizing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal support for restoration work over the next decade.

Environmental stewardship of the Basin's extraordinary resources depends on public support from residents and visitors. There is widespread support for the updated Regional Plan, and local Tahoe communities are eager to move forward with lake restoration and economic revitalization.

As United States Senators representing the States of California and Nevada who share your passion for protecting and restoring Lake Tahoe, we ask that you consider these important issues as you contemplate the Sierra Club's next steps regarding the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan.

Sincerely,


Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator