

Lahontan board OKs changes to water quality plan

By Kathryn Reed

In order for elements of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan to be effective, what's known as the 208 Plan needs approval from Nevada and California.

The Nevada Environmental Protection Agency signed off on the water quality management plan in January. Now it's up to California's Water Board to do the same. The first step in getting that done happened Thursday morning with the recommendation by the Lahontan Regional Board to approve the 208 Plan Amendment.



Not everyone agrees how to regulate water quality at Tahoe. Photo/LTN file

"The existing 208 Plan is a product of its time," Bob Larsen with Lahontan told the board of the nearly 30-year-old document. This means it does not have total maximum daily load (aka sediment content reaching Lake Tahoe) regulations in it. Plus, there are other inconsistencies based on the TRPA Regional Plan adopted in December.

Laurel Ames with the Tahoe Sierra Club and Jennifer Quashnick

with the Friends of the West Shore spoke Feb. 14 in favor of delaying a vote on the 208 Plan Amendment. These are the two groups that earlier this week sued to invalidate the Regional Plan.

Lahontan staff refuted their contention that adopting the changes to the Clean Water Act would negatively impact water quality and land coverage.

TRPA attorney John Marshal said, "The Sierra Club and the Friends of the West Shore are just dead wrong when they say there is not enough environmental analysis."

The Lahontan Water Quality Control Board voted unanimously in favor of the amendment.