

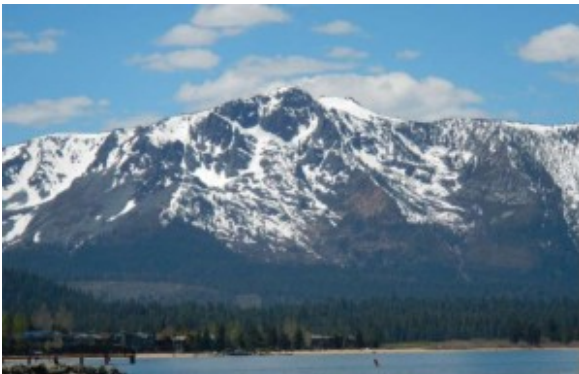
Calif., Nev. governors make peace regarding TRPA

By Kathryn Reed

California and Nevada had decided to play nice and stop with the talk of withdrawing from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Near identical press releases were sent out from both governors' offices Tuesday afternoon saying they have reached a compromise.

"This agreement renews our commitment to work together to do what's best for the environment and economy of the Lake Tahoe region. We urge state legislators and Congress to help us protect Tahoe's future by taking action," Govs. Jerry Brown and Brian Sandoval said in the May 14 statement.



Mount Tallac's winter thaw is symbolic of tensions between California and Nevada easing. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The tussle began when Nevada threatened to pull out of the bi-state Compact if certain concessions were not made on the part of California as well as if a Regional Plan could not be

ratified. The latter was done in December. Concessions had been harder to achieve. The voting structure of the Governing Board is one of the more contentious items.

Then the respective legislatures started getting nasty and threatening. That is when the leaders of the two states said settle down, we'll figure this out.

Both press releases say, "Under the agreement, developed with legislative leadership from both states, amendments will be introduced to bills in the Nevada and California state legislatures that repeal Nevada's planned withdrawal from the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact in 2015 and California's proposal to re-establish a California Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in 2014."

Some of the wording in the agreement will require congressional approval because Congress formed TRPA.

The governors want economics to play a role in decisions made by the Governing Board.

Criticism has been leveled against the TRPA that the Regional Plan that had been in place stifled redevelopment, which in turn led to property owners letting their buildings deteriorate. That in turn made Lake Tahoe not a pretty place to visit at least in terms of the built environment.

TRPA embraces what the governors are doing.

"This is a historic moment for Lake Tahoe. Over the years, the states have had disagreements but have always found a way to work things out. Today there has been a commitment to renew the partnership. This renewal will be important to help Lake Tahoe face the challenges ahead," TRPA Executive Director Joanne Marchetta told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We still have a lot of work to do to implement the new Regional Plan. We are pleased by this announcement because through the partnership of two states and many other organizations and agencies, we have

accomplished much and can continue working together to fulfill our shared restoration goals.”

The agreement also will add language to the Compact that establishes a burden of proof for challenging decisions.

Many of the Governing Board’s decisions are met with a lawsuit.

And while the additional language seems like a compromise, the burden of proof is already the plaintiff’s responsibility in a court of law, so this addition is more like window dressing than substance.

The League to Save Lake Tahoe sent out a press release saying the governors have done the right thing. While this South Lake Tahoe-based conservation group has often been the one to sue TRPA, when it comes to the lawsuit challenging the 5-month-old Regional Plan, that is the doing of the Sierra Club. Today’s decision has no bearing on that lawsuit.