# Congress may approve LT Restoration Act in lame duck session

**By Darren Goode, Politico**

Democratic efforts to push through more than 100 public lands and water bills in the lame duck session are reaching a fever pitch, with the recognition this is the last chance many of them have to become law.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., has tasked Democratic leaders on at least three committees to come up with a list of bills that could get past a GOP filibuster.



The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act could be approved in this congressional session. Photo/Kathryn Reed

They may also need to be able to secure the two-thirds support that would be needed if the House tries to expedite the package without amendments in a tight legislative calendar.

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., told reporters Thursday that she has given Reid a draft list of bills to consider. That evolving list is believed to include plans to provide protection to the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Lake Tahoe, the Gulf of Mexico and the San Francisco Bay.

“The issue is getting 60 votes, which we think we can,” Boxer said.

**Read the whole story**

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# Lawyer: Woman who sued El Dorado sheriff to lose job

**By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee**

The second of three female community service officers who sued the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department has been served notice today that the department indends on terminate her.

The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court in July by Nicole Sahaj-Myers, Stacie Walls and Jona Scher, claims the department subjects women to harassment and discrimination. It’s the second such suit filed in recent months.

**Read the whole story**

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# El Dorado County hires CAO

Terri Daly, assistant chief administrative officer for El Dorado County, will lose the assistant part of her title starting Dec. 14.

The Board of Supervisors have chosen her to replace Gayle Erbe-Hamlin, who has retired.

Daly has been assistant CAO since July. Prior to that she was CAO in Amador County.

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# NTPUD general manager steps down

North Tahoe Public Utility District General Manager Curtis Aaron is resigning effective Dec. 17.

He is relocating back to Southern California due to family concerns. Aaron joined the district in March 2007.

An Open House will be Dec. 9 at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach to bid farewell to Aaron.

“Curtis has made significant contributions to the District in his short time here,” Lane Lewis, president of the board of directors, said in a statement. “In addition to the significant capital projects that have been completed in his tenure, the district has reduced spending and improved administrative operations. He will be missed.”

Paul Schultz, Planning and Engineering manager, has been named the acting general manager. The board will discuss the next

steps related to their search for a new General Manager at the Dec. 7 meeting.

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# Road rage lands Stateline man in jail on weapons, drug charges

A Stateline man was arrested by South Lake Tahoe police officers on a slew of chargers in what started as a road rage incident.

A 911 called was placed Dec. 4 at 8:55pm that turned into a handgun brandishing. The caller said a green Chevrolet pickup had been tailgating him until he stopped at a light on Highway 50 near Stateline.

“That was when the tailgater pulled up next to him and pointed a handgun at him,” Sgt. Shannon Laney said in a statement.

Officers located the green Chevy on Lake Tahoe Boulevard near Silver Dollar Ave and conducted a high risk traffic stop. All traffic on Lake Tahoe Boulevard was stopped temporarily while officers took the suspect into custody.

William Coaker was arrested with a .38-caliber handgun and ammunition, more than a pound of marijuana, a machete and a Marine “Ka-bar” knife in his truck, according to Laney. Officers said Coaker admitted to the brandishing and stated he was “in fear for his safety” when he showed the victim the gun.

# Postal Service ready for busiest season of the year

Neither rain nor snow nor heat nor gloom of night will keep the Postal Service from delivering the holidays. Between now and Christmas Eve, the Postal Service will deliver 15.8 billion cards, letters and packages across the country and around the world.



The Postal Service expects to deliver nearly 3 billion cards and letters over the holidays and there are more than 3 billion holiday stamps available to handle the volume. This year, a snowman and the words “Happy Holidays” will appear in the upper right-hand corner of greeting cards and letters mailed during the month of December.

During this holiday season, the Postal Service also expects:

* 97 million customers to visit a post office

* 30 million pounds of mail to be delivered to overseas military installations, including Iraq and war zones in Afghanistan

* 4.7 million shipping labels to be printed using Click-N-Ship

The busiest mailing day is set for Dec. 20. More than 800 million cards, letters and packages are expected to be mailed on that day alone, compared to 559 million on a typical day. Dec. 22 will be the busiest delivery day. Staff at the National Operations Center work 24/7 to help navigate mail movement around the world.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating

expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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# Nevada tourism conference focuses on changing industry

A panel of top hotel executives and gaming experts will address the changing hospitality industry and their strategic plans for 2011 at the Nevada Governor’s Conference on Tourism next week.

The panel consists of John Farahi, co-chairman and CEO of Monarch Casino Resort Inc.; Jonathan Halkyard, senior vice president and CFO of Caesars Entertainment Corporation; Bill Hughes, director of marketing operations of the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino; and Ryan Sheltra, general manager of the Bonanza Casino.

Panelists will discuss how their properties have diversified over the years to meet the changing needs and desires of visitors, as well as their plans for 2011.

The conference, produced by Nevada Commission on Tourism, opens Dec. 7 with the quarterly tourism commission meeting, followed by the first General Session at 1pm. The General Session will address the economic outlook for Nevada’s target markets. It will look at the factors that travelers must weigh when deciding to travel and how those factors affect decision-making.

Two afternoon sessions follow the General Session, both aimed at learning how to better communicate with travelers and set one’s destination apart from the rest. Bill Siegel, CEO of

Longwoods International, will present “Rules of Engagement,” a session on how to connect with visitors on an emotional level and increase business through customer interaction. A panel of marketing executives from throughout Nevada will discuss the tools to communicate with travelers. Jennifer Cunningham of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority, Cathy Tull of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and NCOT’s JoLyn Laney will share how they target visitors and shift their communications based on needs of the markets.

The General Session on Dec. 8, will start with two representatives from Google to discuss “new media” and how to allocate advertising dollars to the appropriate media channels to reach visitors where they consume information. This session will be immediately followed by a presentation on the status of international travel by the U.S. Travel Association.

Afternoon sessions include an update on what’s ahead for the air-travel industry; measuring return on investment in advertising; and the use of members-only sales websites.

Wednesday’s lunch program will include a special presentation to former Sen. Richard Bryan, who was governor when the Nevada Commission on Tourism was created. Bryan and the 1983 Nevada Legislature designated a fraction of the state room tax to be spent on tourism promotion, thus creating the tourism agency and its self-perpetuating budget to increase travel to the state.

The conference will be held at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno. Registration is available online and onsite. Visit the website for a full agenda and information on keynote speakers.

# 50 pounds of pot found in Stateline storage center

About 50 pounds of marijuana, other drugs and weapons were seized from a Stateline storage facility on Dec. 3 by Douglas County sheriff's deputies.

The investigation was initiated after employees of Kingsbury Self Storage alerted deputies about the strong odor of marijuana coming from within the storage units.

A search warrant was obtained for the unit, resulting in the seizure of approximately 50 pounds of marijuana, 2 ounces of cocaine and a loaded semi-automatic pistol. No suspects were located on-scene.

The estimated street value of the seized marijuana is $150,000. Estimated street value of the seized cocaine is $5,000.

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# Reno hotel tax collections increase despite lower room rates

**By Bill O'Driscoll, Reno Gazette-Journal**

The average charge for a night's lodging in the Reno-Tahoe region over the first nine months of this year rose 1.4 percent from 2009, according to the region's tourism agency.

But as temperatures fall with the advent of another winter of

recession, downward pressure on room rates is coming to bear. And area properties are facing the challenge of filling rooms – but at what cost?

Discounts of up to 60 percent were posted recently on Expedia.com for one area property, Grand Sierra Resort, which for a time in November also was offering two nights free without an additional booking. GSR officials declined to comment.

The head of the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority downplayed her concern even though two-thirds of the agency's budget is financed through taxes of up to 13.5 percent, depending on locale, on room receipts.

**Read the whole story**

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# Nevada board votes to make substitute pot illegal

**By Jessica Cramer, Daily Sparks Tribune**

RENO – Products sold as legal substitutes for marijuana will soon be illegal after a vote Thursday by the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy.

The vote means head shops, which specialize in articles of interest to drug users, will soon have to remove products containing certain synthetic cannabinoids from their shelves.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administra-tion (DEA) on Nov. 24 announced it will use its emergency scheduling authority to temporarily make five chemicals used to make synthetic marijuana products illegal. Products including chemicals

JWH-018, JWH-073, JWH-200, CP-47, 497 and cannabicyclohexanol will be illegal in the United States after Dec. 24. The DEA then has one year, with the possibility of a six-month extension, to determine whether the chemicals should remain illegal.

**Read the whole story**