Water providers fighting Calif. ban on watering sidewalks

By Dale Kasler and Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

It seemed like the sort of thing any drought-wary Californian could support.

The state's water cops were poised last month to pass a set of rules prohibiting what most everyone agrees are wasteful water uses –like letting water from a hose without a nozzle flow into a storm drain.

But no change in California water policy ever comes easily. The State Water Resources Control Board's proposal to impose permanent conservation rules – such as prohibiting hosing down driveways, watering lawns less than two days after it rains and washing a car without attaching a shut-off nozzle to the hose – ran into a cascade of opposition.

Read the whole story

Work to resume on Kingsbury Grade upgrades

On April 2, the Nevada Department of Transportation will begin the second scheduled construction season of roadway drainage pipe improvements on Kingsbury Grade.

Between early April and fall, single lane closures with a

traffic flagger will periodically be in place on the Carson Valley side of Kingsbury Grade between mileposts 3 and 11. The single lane closures will primarily take place Mondays through Fridays between 7am and 5pm, with periodic Saturday and late evening lane closures. Motorists should anticipate travel delays of no more than 30 minutes through the work zone, with the majority of travel delays being less than 10 minutes.

Construction will not take place during major special events.

The project began in early September 2017 before a scheduled winter construction shutdown. Thus far, approximately 450 linear feet of storm drain pipe has been installed and roughly 1,300 linear feet of pipe reinforced.

In total, approximately 15,000 feet of eroding roadway drainage pipe will be reinforced with a cured-in-place pipe liner. A flexible pipe liner is inserted into existing drainage pipes. Resins in the liners are then hardened, creating a durable pipe able to last decades. The reinforcing pipe liners are often more cost-effective and less disruptive than traditional "dig and replace" pipe repair methods. The project will also replace certain roadway drainage inlets and add manholes for additional drainage access.

The cost is approximately $4.4 million.

Nev. Department of Ed delays gender diversity regulation

By Sam Gross, Reno Gazette-Journal

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Department of Education again held

off Friday on adopting a broad anti-bullying regulation aimed at protecting the state's gender-diverse pupils.

The regulation includes a list of 20 requirements and measures that school districts around the state must adhere to, including requiring additional gender diversity training for school administrators and recognizing students by their chosen names and pronouns.

State Superintendent Steve Canavero held off on approving the regulation Friday and said another workshop is already scheduled for next Friday, and the date for a final hearing will be announced shortly.

Read the whole story

Audit: EDC financial statements all in order

El Dorado County's financial statements received a clean opinion from independent auditors.

According to county Auditor Joe Harn, this means "the public can be confident that the county's financial reporting is accurate, reliable, and transparent."

The audited financial statements, management discussion and analysis, and other information related to the independent audit are **online**.

The audit was conducted by the certified public accounting firm of Maze & Associates.

The annual audit committee consists of two county supervisors

and members of the Grand Jury. The CAO participates in an advisory capacity.

“The best government transparency involves placing all financial information online in a readily understandable manner,” Harn said. “Government transparency allows taxpayers to see how our county is spending tax money, and gives El Dorado County citizens the ability to hold us accountable. The internet is a great place to enhance transparency.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Training is the key to school resource officers’ success

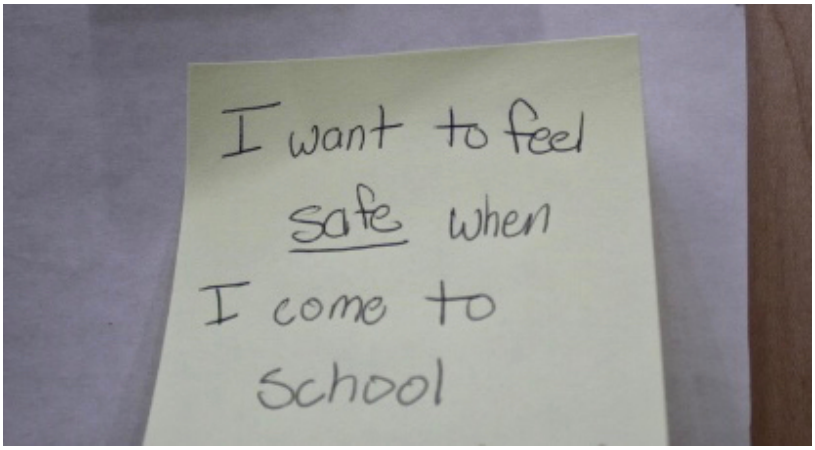
By Elizabeth Englander, The Conversation

Despite legitimate concerns about the effects of placing school resource officers in the nation’s schools, the reality is having these officers on a school’s campus can literally save lives and avert tragedy.

That much became clear on March 20, when school resource officer Blaine Gaskill rushed toward a shooter who had opened fire at Great Mills High School in Maryland. He effectively stopped the shooter, who had already wounded two students.

Gaskill’s heroic work stands in stark contrast to that of Deputy Scot Peterson, who was seen on video footage standing outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., as the school shooting there was under way. At Marjory Stoneman, 17 people, mostly students, were killed on Feb. 14.

So why do some resource officers perform so well while others don’t?



A South Tahoe High School student’s plea. Photo/Julie Threewit

The need for training and standards

What makes a school resource officer successful, though, isn’t only about how they respond to emergencies. In fact, a critical part of their role is in prevention. Stopping school violence before it ever begins relies heavily on the training that school resource officers, commonly referred to as SROs, receive or don’t receive.

I make these observations as the director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center and as one who has co-authored a technical report on campus violence prevention and response to active shooters.

Incredibly, there are no national standards – and in many cases no state standards – for school resource officer training. That means there is little consistency in how SROs are prepared to work in schools.

While school resource officers have already undergone regular police training, SRO training that exists tends to focus on legal issues or school security, as opposed to other things like de-escalation techniques, bullying and cyberbullying,

child development, symptoms of trauma, or educational issues, such as working with children with special needs.

How school officers could make things worse

In my opinion, this lack of training is one of the factors that is fueling the debate over the use of police officers in schools. The U.S. Department of Education has recommended that school resource officers not be involved in school discipline, as inadequately trained officers may inadvertently escalate problems or criminalize students and contribute to what has come to be known as the "school-to-prison pipeline." This is a particularly sensitive issue when it comes to dealing with minority and disabled students.

In 2015, Deputy Ben Fields garnered national attention when a cell phone video emerged of him appearing to body slam and drag a female student across a classroom at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, S.C. Such incidents force us to question the wisdom of putting police officers, particularly officers not trained to work with children, in American high schools.

To complicate things further, one study that examined the impact of SROs found that their presence in schools was not all good or bad. For instance, while arrests for disorderly conduct increased, arrests for more serious offenses decreased.

And yet other studies suggest how positive an influence school resource officers can be. Research on almost 2,000 students found that youth who had positive opinions about police officers reported feeling safer in schools with SROs present. In a study in which researchers interviewed dozens of SROs, officers themselves tend to emphasize the importance of informal discussions and education, instead of being overly reliant on formal discipline, whenever possible.

Training is emerging as key in helping SROs successfully increase school safety, as recognized in a U.S. Department of

Education guide on improving school climate and discipline and "A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools."

Yet despite a high level of consensus among researchers and criminal justice experts that school resource officers should undergo specialized training, few of the 19,000 SROs in the United States are in fact trained.

Different training, different outcomes

Gaps in training could also explain the difference between the responses in Florida and Maryland.

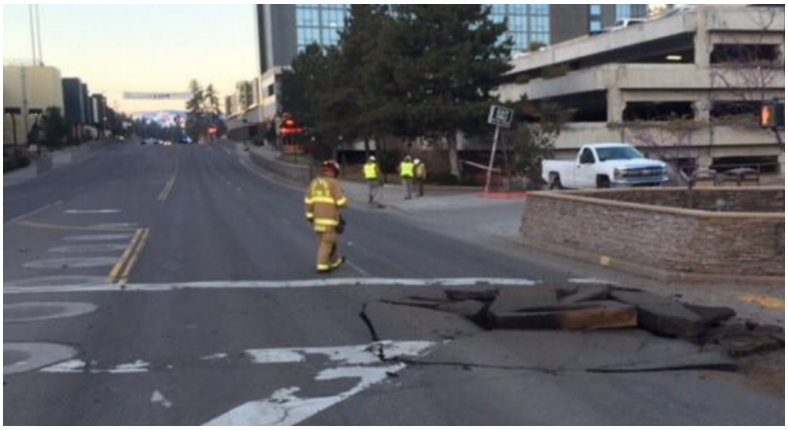
In "Campus Violence, Prevention and Response," a 2008 report that I co-authored, my colleagues and I recommended that campus officers should all be trained in active shooter response tactics. In an active shooter situation, as my colleagues and I argued, campus police need specialized equipment to gain forcible entry into locked buildings and classrooms. This is different from traditional training, where police may be instructed to wait outside. Their staffing levels need to be adequate for the size and layout of the school.

But our report also made recommendations about prevention. A key recommendation was that school personnel need to be trained to identify students at risk.

The Parkland school shooter clearly demonstrated many such warning signs. This is one of the reasons why police there are reviewing why all these warnings did not suggest a significant pattern to local police.

Elizabeth Englander is a professor of psychology and the director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University.

No injuries from electrical explosion at Stateline



Highway 50 near Hard Rock in Stateline is severely damaged. Photo/DCSO

Updated 9:35am:

By Kathryn Reed

An underground electrical explosion this morning in Stateline has caused Highway 50 to buckle and be closed, and for power to be cut off.

A loud explosion was heard at about 5:15am April 1 in front of the Hard Rock Lake Tahoe.

Investigators were still on the scene as of 9am Sunday trying to figure out what went wrong and how to fix things.

“A pole vault caused the original explosion. A second pole vault is being taxed and they are trying to isolate the situation,” Douglas County sheriff’s Sgt. Bernadette Smith told *Lake Tahoe News.*

No one was injured.



It could be weeks before the road is fixed. Photo/DCSO

The explosion blew off a manhole cover and caused asphalt to fly, thus creating a depression in the roadway. Highway 50 is closed between Stateline Avenue and Lake Parkway. Smith said the westbound lanes could be closed for weeks, though the eastbound lanes could open later Sunday.

Meg Ragonese with the Nevada Department of Transportation said NV Energy is still dealing with live infrastructure so it is too soon to know when the road would open or repairs would begin.

“They would make all the repairs since it is a utility related incident. There is not estimate yet of reopening the highway,” Ragonese told *LTN.*

About 400 customers were without power for about two hours. Then NV Energy crews rerouted circuits, with the outage affecting only seven customer at of 9:30am.

“It’s under investigation. They don’t know what caused it. Any number of things could have happened,” Calder Chism, NV Energy spokesman, told *LTN.*

A security guard at Hard Rock hung up on *Lake Tahoe News* when asked a series of questions, including if anyone was evacuated.

Congress bans restaurants from skimming tips

By Lydia DePillis, CNNMoney

Restaurant servers dodged a bullet last week with a provision tucked into the $1.3 trillion federal spending bill.
Late last year, the Department of Labor proposed a rule that would have authorized restaurants to share tips between servers and cooks. That would allow employers to keep some tip money for themselves, as long as each worker made at least the full federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

Workers' rights groups argued the rule change would lower the pay of those who work at restaurants, hotels and bars. Opponents of the rule held splashy public protests. The Labor Department received more than 218,000 mostly negative comments on the proposal.

Read the whole story

Tahoe on Airbnb's top 10 list for spring break

By Nancy Trejos, USA Today

Families staying at Airbnb properties for spring break this year are staying closer to home.

A survey conducted by Airbnb of 1,003 adults this month found that fewer than 10 percent of families were planning to travel internationally. Only one international destination made the top 10 list of spring break destinations: Paris. More than three in five families say they would stay within driving distance.

Read the whole story

Fire funding fix comes with environmental rollbacks

By Jessica Kutz, High Country News

Congress accomplished something unprecedented last week: They passed a bipartisan solution to a knotty budget issue that has hobbled the U.S. Forest Service's ability to do restoration and fire-prevention work in Western forests. The $1.3 trillion federal spending package, signed into law by President Trump, included a long-sought funding fix for wildfire response. Starting in 2020, the Forest Service will be able to access over $2 billion a year outside of its regular fire suppression budget.

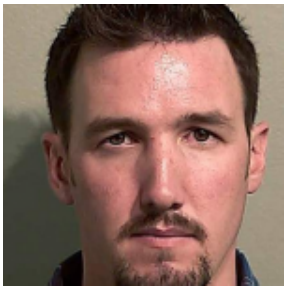
Some conservation groups question whether the fix was worth the compromises included in the bill, which could undermine environmental protections for forests and wildlife. The bill includes two riders that concern them. The first will allow logging projects less than 3,000 acres in size to move forward with little environmental review, so long as the goal of those projects is to reduce heavy fuel loads that increase fire

risk.

A second provision could delay habitat protections for newly listed threatened and endangered species.

Read the whole story

Truckee man pleads no contest in rape case



James Russell Ferrigno

A Truckee man could be sent to prison for six years after pleading no contest to charges of drugging and raping a woman.

James Russell Ferrigno, 32, entered the plea earlier this month. He was arrested in October. 2017.

Investigators said the victim was renting a room from Ferrigno. She told police she suspected Ferrigno of putting a substance in her drink at night, which led her to set up a camera in the kitchen.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 8. Upon release from prison Ferrigno would have to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report