

Opinion: How to dilute the power of politicians

By Steven Greenut

SACRAMENTO — When I lived in Iowa, I was an average citizen, and, one day, I had a question for the governor's office for an article I was writing for a small newsletter. I called the Capitol number and was transferred to an aide, who responded with something to this effect: "Why don't you come and ask the governor yourself? Are you free next Monday at 11:30?"

When I got there at 11:30, the governor was waiting and gave me a half-hour of his time.

Getting an audience with Gov. Jerry Brown — or any other recent California governor — would be nearly impossible for an average citizen, and, indeed, it is tough enough to get such access even for someone writing for a major newspaper. The chief executive of a state with 39 million people — especially a state wrestling with a \$26.6 billion budget deficit — usually won't have time for Molly from Modesto, even if the governor of a state with 3 million people might occasionally be able to meet with Steve from Des Moines.

But while it's unrealistic to expect average voters to get a visit with their governor, they should have a chance to meet with their state representative. Unfortunately, California's residents have only a slim chance of meeting with their Assembly members, the ones who are supposed to be the people's advocates.

Iowans, for instance, are represented by 103 members of the House of Representatives, whereas Californians are represented by 80 members of the Assembly. Simple math: There's one representative for every 29,151 Iowans (using 2008 data) and one Assembly member for every 459,458 Californians (now

483,000). There's an elected representative in New Hampshire's house for every 3,290 Granite State residents, the lowest ratio of such representation in the nation.

I gave a talk last weekend at the state Libertarian Party Convention at Lake Tahoe. I spoke about the failure of California Republicans and focused on the party's failure to end redevelopment agencies. Activist Michael Warnken approached me afterward and handed me the above data. He said it made his point that the continuation of redevelopment, which Gov. Brown wants to end, is a "representation problem."

Steven Greenhut is editor of www.calwatchdog.com; write to him at sgreenhut@calwatchdog.com.

Read the whole story

Opinion: FAA's problems run deeper than sleeping controllers

Publisher's note: This editorial is from the April 13, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.

The Federal Aviation Administration has a problem.

It's not simply that a controller fell asleep in the tower at Reno-Tahoe International Airport early Wednesday as a medical flight was attempting to land, as troubling as that is.

One incident of that nature can be excused as the action – or inaction – of a poor employee. It might even be possible to ignore a second incident as nothing more than a coincidence.

But Wednesday's failure of a controller in Reno to respond to a pilot's calls – as well as those of concerned airport officials – is the fifth time since the beginning of the year that there has been a serious lapse in an airport control tower and the fourth involving a sleeping controller.

That's not happenstance. That's a sign of a troubled agency whose employees and managers must be held accountable.

Read the whole story

Soroptimist community's support at Elegant Evening

To the community,

The 2011 Elegant Evening at Harrah's was quite a success and that was due, in the most part, to the generosity of businesses and friends in our community.

The Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra wish to thank everyone who attended this fun and worthwhile event and also those that donated to make it so profitable for the programs and organizations that we as a group support.

As always, every dollar raised goes back into our town, schools, programs and students.

It was very well-attended and beautifully decorated thanks to the assistance of Harrah's and their fabulous staffs and delicious food. A special kudo to Paul Ellbogen, Paul Voss, Robin Eissinger, Karen Lantz-Feith, Linda Hunt, Mary Wood and

the banquet/catering staffs for their hard work and monetary assistance. hard work and monetaryPlease support the following businesses and friends who were patrons of our 2011 Elegant Evening:

Advanced Cosmetic Dermatology & Surgery, Advocacy for Youth International – Kim Gayner , Alpina Café, Alpine Carpet One, Alpine Clothing Company, Alpine Computers, Altitude Salon & Spa – Sherry Hawks, American Red Cross, Andrea Sorrentino Salon, Angel Touch – Anna Terry and Wendi Elvin, Angie's Signs, Anytime Fitness, Apres Wine Bar, Bags For All Reasons, Balance Body Studio, Balancing Your Business, Barbara Gustafson, Barton Memorial Hospital, Beauty Control: Linda LaFavor-Coyle, Bent Glass Art Studio, Bio Spirit Spa, Bistro Danielle, Bleu Wave, Bliss Salon, Blue Dog Pizza, Body Essentials, Bonita Paulis, Brian Walker Photography, Café Girasole, Calstar, Capisce?, Carol Hug, Cathy Huffman, Cedarville Vineyard, Charlee Puentes at Altitude, Chart House, South Lake Tahoe Parks and Recreation Department, Crossfit – Steve Wetterer, CV Sports, Deb Howard & Co., Dianne Ross, Dick's Fuller O'Brien Paints, Dirk Yuricich Photography, Disneyland, Dog Dog Cat, Dollar Signs & Graphics, Dona Baxter-Mobile DJ, Dorothy Davis, Paul and Cookie Rork, Sports Performance Chiropractic – Adam Spindler, Dylan Silver, Eagle Valley Golf Course, Ed Cook Tree Service, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, El Dorado Savings Bank, Ellen Nunes, Embassy Suites Resort Lake Tahoe, Emerald Bay Salon, Eric Linkugel Photography, Ernie's Cafe, Event's Ink, Evieivyover, Expanding Adventures – Linda Keel, Fastas Pasta, FBI, Floral Vineyard & Khristophers, Fox Gasoline, Freshies, Genasci & Stigers Family Dentistry, Genoa Lakes Golf Club and Resort, Genoa Lakes Supper Club, George Alm, Getaway Café, Grassroots Natural Foods, Grocery Outlet, Hampton Inn & Suites at Truckee, Harrah's Donations Committee – Linda Hunt, Harrah's Harvey's Lake Tahoe and John Koster and his amazing team, Heaven Scent Salon, Home Depot, Hot Gossip, House of Ski, Hunan Garden, Inn by the Lake, Jamba Juice, Jeff and Billie

Lea Parker, Jim Stamates, Joanne Reuter – RAH, Jo Anne Wood, Joe and JoAnn Tillson, John and Betsy Williams, John's Cleaners, Kahle Community Center, Kalanis, Kathay Lovell, Kathe Brooks, Kat's Home Décor, Keith Price , Ken and Nancy Rollston, Kerry and Wendy David, Kirkwood Mountain Resort, KizmeTech, Kiwanis Sunrisers Club, KRLT, KTH0, Lake Tahoe Golf Course, Lake Tahoe Holidays, Lake Tahoe Master Framing, Lake Tahoe News, Lake Valley Fire Protection District, Lakeside Inn & Casino, Les Schwab Tire Center, Lindsey Felsch, Lisa Ryczkowski-Nigon, Live Out Loud, Marcia Sarosik Dance Studio, Maren's Art ala Maren Linkugel, Marie Schweitzer, Markleeville Art Gallery, Mary Kay Cosmetics – Leticea Hansen, Midkiff & Associates Inc., Mikaela Bianchi, Mind & Body Fitness, Mirabelle French Cuisine, Mo's Place, Mountain Yoga, Mt. Rose Ski Resort, Nails by Lisa Quick, Naked Fish, Nancy Gayner, Nel's Hardware, New Day Nail & Hair Day Spa, North Face, North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, Off the Hook, Orchid's Thai, Outside TV, Overland Meat Co. , Pacific Crest Gallery, Pam Brekas, Peter Darvas, Picchetti Winery, Pine Cone Resort, Pottery by Lynn, Powder House, Princess Productions, ProClean Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning, Randall Hazeltine, Riva Grill, Robert Huckaby, Robert A. Mancinelli, Ron Wood , Ross Groelz, Round Hill Jewelers, Round Hill Pines Beach, Rural Squirrel, Safeway, Scotty's Hardware, Scusa's On Ski Run, Sherna Kopple-Svensson, Sidestreet Boutique, Sierra-at-Tahoe, Sierra Pizza, Signs of Tahoe, Ski Run Boat Company, Skin and Hair Wellness, Soaring NV, Sorensen's Resort, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, South Lake Tahoe Fire Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Sprouts Natural Foods Cafe, Staples, Stateline Brewery, Steamers Bar & Grill, Studio 6 Hair Design, Sunridge Golf Course, Susan Welch, Svadhyaya Yoga & Wellness Center, Tahoe Bowl, Tahoe Cakes by Grace, Tahoe Carpet Care, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District, Tahoe Douglas Rotary Club, Tahoe Grille, Tahoe Keys Deli, Tahoe Keys Liquor, Tahoe One-Hour Cleaners, Tahoe Paradise Golf, Tahoe Ridge Winery, Tahoe Season's Resort, Tahoe Trading Post, Tahoe Valley Pharmacy, Tep's Villa Roma, The Free Bird,

The Soul Experience, Thunder Canyon Country Club, Thunderbird Preservation Society, Wade Morgan, and Wolfgang Puck Gourmet Express.

Among our 420 guests that evening were these businesses we'd like to thank for joining us: Ross Groelz dentistry, Mountain View Management, Take Care Health, Wells Fargo Bank, Yonker Construction, Brooks & Holcomb, Sports Performance Chiropractic, Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Arts Project, and South Lake Tahoe Fire Department.

Tahoe Sierra Soroptimist International

Opinion: Streamlining essential to refocus TRPA on regional issues

Publisher's note: *This is one in a series of columns from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.*

By Joanne Marchetta

Much is said in commentary about the complicated regulatory environment at Lake Tahoe. For decades, environmental rules here have overlaid the usual building codes for public health and safety. The reason people came together in the 1980s to establish these environmental rules, was to stop harm to Lake Tahoe's sensitive environment.

But TRPA and partner agencies discovered in the mid-1990s that regulation alone would not improve Lake Tahoe's environment fully or fast enough. We know now, based on scientific studies, that a regulatory system that results in promoting

the status quo where private properties become rundown leads to the continued degradation of the lake and our communities.



Joanne
Marchetta

We can change this path. TRPA is updating ordinances and permitting processes to help property owners deliver good, environmentally beneficial projects. Since so many properties were built before we had conservation standards in place, there's a great deal of what we call "environmental redevelopment" work to do. And this work can achieve multiple benefits—not just for the environment, but for the economic health and vitality of our local communities.

Last year, TRPA embraced a strategic plan built on four pillars to achieve our mission. This article is the first in a series describing the four strategic pillars and what they mean for you and the ecosystem in which we are privileged to live. This first part speaks to the importance of streamlining the Tahoe Basin's regulatory processes, which have come to be known as a problem rather than the solution they need to be. Forthcoming are articles describing how we propose to

- Achieve accelerated environmental gain on the ground
- Improve the agency's operational efficiency
- Engage the community and advance excellent customer service.

What we are doing to simplify our regulations is especially pertinent because of the bill recently introduced in the

Nevada Legislature to withdraw Nevada from the Bi-State Tahoe Compact. According to senators sponsoring the bill, its impetus lies in the intrinsic differences and strained relationships between the states of California and Nevada. However, there is also an understandable amount of frustration and criticism directed at the complexity of the basin's rules and processes to get a permit, allowing property owners to change the status quo. The introduction of this bill has provided an important opportunity for me to help educate legislators and members of the public on the dramatic shift TRPA has made recently to improve our performance in this area. I have also had the opportunity to outline the many external challenges that exist to the improvements TRPA is trying to make.

With our overarching mission to improve the lake's water quality, the top priority for TRPA's streamlining effort is to reformat and simplify the TRPA Code of Ordinances in a way that is illustrative and narrative so that any property owner or local building inspector can understand what's called for and easily put it to use. A team of staff and consultants have already started this important work and so far, just through reorganization and consolidating redundancy, have found a way to reduce the weight of the document by more than a pound.

Converting all paper records to a more accessible electronic form is another streamlining directive on which we're making progress. Having more records available online will help streamline real estate transactions and basic information searches. When a property owner wants to know how much land coverage is available or other practical information to plan a project, it should be easily accessible from a computer anywhere. These measures will be supported by bringing permit applications online to tie into the revised code of ordinances making all agency processes more transparent, accessible and understandable to the people who need to use them.

But perhaps a more fundamental shift, and one that will take

greater resolve and support from partner agencies and conservation groups alike, is the effort to delegate more categories of residential and commercial permitting to your local building departments and to ultimately move TRPA back into the role of innovative, regional planner that was originally envisioned. TRPA needs to focus on partnerships, area-wide solutions, and multi-jurisdiction coordination to deliver quantum leaps in needed environmental improvement. Permits for a project in your back yard can be consolidated with permits from your local building department to simplify your experience. This ultimate streamlining move will not be easy. Where TRPA has already built strong partnerships with local governments to offer permit services on our behalf, we need to go further so that TRPA can focus on areas where science tells us much greater environmental gains are possible over the next several decades.

Shifting our emphasis to regional environmental goals and leaving residential projects to local governments will achieve far greater benefit for the lake's environment than the cumbersome way we do our business today.

Change comes hard at Lake Tahoe and we'll need community support to work through the opposition that may come from special interests. But TRPA can become the regional planning agency we once were. We can once again live up to our reputation on the world stage as a cutting-edge environmental leader. By becoming the very best at building regionwide partnerships to deliver environmental gain, we can help local communities build their own sustainable futures around a healthy, world-famous environment.

TRPA is taking a hard look at itself and has found that our problems are fixable, and I have set TRPA on a course to do just that. Take a closer look at our strategic plan online.

Until next time, thank you.

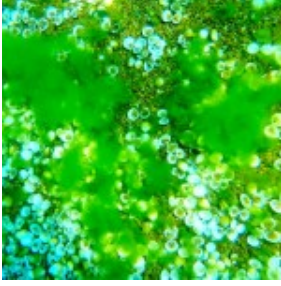
Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Agencies try to root out invasive species from Tahoe

By Max Neale

On April 5, the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Coordination Committee hosted its first Aquatic Invasive Species public forum at the U.S. Forest Service building in South Lake Tahoe. The event featured expert speakers from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, UC Davis, and was facilitated by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District. Topics of discussion included AIS threats nationwide and basinwide, the latest research on Lake Tahoe AIS, past and upcoming control management efforts and upcoming changes to the watercraft inspection program.

Steve Chilton, Lake Tahoe and Northern Nevada AIS coordinator for the Fish and Wildlife Service, described AIS, such as the Asian clam and Eurasian water milfoil, as “a serious problem for Lake Tahoe, both ecologically and economically.” Chilton explained that in the United States AIS cause hundreds of millions of dollars in damage and control costs annually.



Elk Point
Asian clam bed
during a
summer 2008
algal bloom.
Photo/Provided

He cites Lake Mead as an example where the quagga mussel, first discovered there in 2007, has spread to nearly every corner of the lake and is now adversely affecting the valuable striped bass fishery. The goals of Lake Tahoe's AIS Management Plan are to prevent new invaders and to monitor, control and eradicate those that currently exist.

Ted Thayer, manager of TRPA's AIS program, presented on the history and structure of Lake Tahoe's research and management efforts. Thayer emphasized the wide reaching impacts of AIS, which have extensive economic, ecological, and social consequences. He also described the importance of Tahoe's collaborative approach to management, which involves more than 50 organizations and agencies working together to prevent and control AIS. The efficacy of this partnership was recently recognized with an award to commend the excellent work being done in the Tahoe basin to combat and prevent AIS from the U.S. Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C.

While last week's forum highlighted past successes, it also addressed the many challenges that currently face Lake Tahoe. Patrick Stone, senior wildlife biologist with TRPA, spoke to the history of aquatic plant invasions, current control methods, and the importance of the watercraft inspection program. "The [watercraft inspection] program is designed to

stop all AIS from entering Lake Tahoe and also to prevent their spread within the Basin.”

Ken Kasman, director of watercraft inspections at TRPA, further described the program as the way best way “to lower this risk of new invasions while still allowing access to the lake.”

Watercraft inspection fees for the 2011 boating season will range from \$30-\$100, depending on vessel size. According to Kasman, inspection fees raise only 29 percent of the funds necessary to operate the inspection program. Federal funding from the Fish and Wildlife Service, state and private sources provide the majority share.

Several researchers, including Lars Andersen from the USDA, Geoff Schladow from the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, and Jay Rowan of the California Department of Fish & Game, outlined research projects for the 2011 field season. Highlights included two pilot projects for control of the Asian clam, a dye study to test the feasibility of aquatic herbicide use in the Tahoe Keys, and a project that aims to reduce the populations of largemouth bass and bluegill, two species of warm water nonnative fish present in the Tahoe Keys.

During the public comment period several people and local business owners raised concerns about boat inspection protocols and the potential economic impact of a reduced bass fishery in the Keys.

A video of the event will be available at www.tahoercd.org. The next AIS public forum is scheduled for fall 2011. Sign up for the Tahoe RCD newsletter to stay informed.

Max Neale is an AmeriCorps member serving as the monitor/control coordinator at the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

Opinion: South Tahoe's cultivation ordinance hurts patients

Publisher's note: *This letter was written to South Lake Tahoe City Manager Tony O'Rourke and reprinted with permission of the author.*

Hi Tony,

I had an opportunity to review your latest draft of the proposed cultivation ordinance. I must tell you I was shocked by what you are proposing, not just because it is illegal, immoral, and unnecessary. No, I was deeply shocked and disturbed by the text of your ordinance because it is truly a shameful document.

Under the proposed ordinance, sick, disabled and dying patients will have until the end of the year to comply with capricious and illegal regulations or face fines, criminal convictions and up to six months in jail, for each day they are in violation.



Steve Kubby

Here is just one of numerous outrageous regulations that could

land sick, disabled and dying patients in jail for years:

"Any violation of this ordinance is hereby declared a public nuisance per se. Any person violating any provision of this ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$1,000.00, by imprisonment in the County jail not to exceed six months, or by both a fine and imprisonment. Such person shall be deemed guilty of a separate offense for each and every day during any portion of which any violation of this ordinance is committed, continued or permitted by such person and shall be punishable as herein provided."

Whoever wrote this document clearly understood the city will be violating our civil and medical rights because in order to comply with this new ordinance you must agree to grant you guys full immunity for your illegal, unconstitutional and immoral actions:

"To the fullest extent permitted by law, any actions taken by a public officer or employee under the provisions of this ordinance shall not become a personal liability of any public officer or employee of the City.

"Permitees pursuant to this ordinance hereby agree to save, defend, indemnify and keep harmless the City and its officials, officers, employees, representatives, agents and volunteers from all actions, claims, demands, litigation, or proceedings, including those for attorneys' fees, against the City in consequence of the granting of this permit, and will, in all things, strictly comply with the conditions under which this permit is granted, if any."

Although the Compassionate Use Act was written as 11362.5 of the Health and Safety Code, the proposed ordinance will move enforcement back to the police chief and fire marshal, granting both the power to invade our home, apparently without a search warrant, if I correctly understand Chapter 17 of the

City Abatement Code.

Furthermore, sick, disabled and dying patients must now notify local burglars and drug police of their activities and location by filing a public notice in the form of a building permit.

Absolutely nothing in the new ordinance does anything to protect patients. No patients were consulted at any time in the creation of this ordinance. Nor does the ordinance fix any problem that cannot be fixed by landlords who can add whatever prohibitions or fines they wish to their leases in order to prevent cultivation in their rental properties.

At a time when the City Council is firing valuable employees because of budget cuts, it seems dangerous and unwise to attempt to pass an ordinance that will most certainly face expensive court challenges. How many more valuable city employees will you have to fire in order to pay for these additional court costs?

Your primary responsibility as city manager is to protect the health and safety of the residents of this city. Instead, you are proposing new ordinance is a direct threat to the health and safety of the medical marijuana community. Please step back and think about the fear, anger and disrespect for you and the City Council that will surely result if you persist in campaigning for this awful and ill-conceived ordinance.

Let freedom grow,

Steve Kubby, South Lake Tahoe

Steve Kubby played a key role in the drafting and passage of Proposition 215. He has written two books on drug policy reform and serves as executive director of the American Medical Marijuana Association.

Cafecitos group gives thanks for community's support

To the publisher,

On March 21, members of the Sierra House Cafecitos group as well as some parents from that school got together to conduct a tamales sale fundraiser that will benefit the school.

The group of dedicated volunteers would like to express their gratitude to the local stores that donated materials and food for this event. They especially would like to thank Juan Ibarra, owner of El Rosal Mexican restaurant in Sparks, who donated 50 pounds of masa dough, a crucial component in the elaboration of tamales.

Cafecitos is a parent-led group that meets every Thursday at Sierra House Elementary School. Its goal is to enhance parent participation in the academic and social lives of their children.

For more information about this group, contact Arturo Rangel at (530) 541.4660.

Arturo Rangel, group coordinator

Opinion: Region must set

realistic goals for development

By Chuck Alvey

What are we now and what do we want to become as an economic region? One of those is an important question and the other is a critical answer.

I recently attended DCI Summit 2011 in New York City, a two-day roundtable hosted by Development Counsellors International, the firm that handles national media relations for the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

CEOs from six economic development organizations from throughout the U.S. met with 12 site consultants – executives who represent companies looking to relocate or expand. We shared ideas and trends in site location, industries and marketing.

What we are now is an important answer because it is how such corporate site selection experts perceive Nevada as a potential place to do business. About 30 percent of company expansions and relocations are managed by independent experts. EDAWN has worked for years to develop and maintain relationships with these consultants.

At Summit 2011 they indicated they like to receive information from communities like Greater Reno-Tahoe, but they emphasized the information should be actual, not aspirational. Often communities and states will claim what type of economic sector they want to become rather than reporting what they are. Aspirational messages don't help site consultants or companies build confidence in considering operating in Nevada (the consultants indicated EDAWN sends actual, not aspirational, messages).

Chuck Alvey is president and CEO of EDAWN – Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Mountain Collective looking for support from community

To the community,

The medical cannabis industry is already operating here in our community of South Lake Tahoe. However, we as a community are not benefiting from it as much as we could be. People in the community may not realize, but Mountain Collective, run by longtime locals, was unjustly denied permission to open a collective in the fall of 2009 when they originally applied with the city of South Lake Tahoe.

The city was biased by making exceptions on the applications for some of the current collectives, but not for Mountain Collective. The other three collectives are all spin-offs of other bigger collectives out of San Jose, Los Angeles and Sacramento.

Since 2009, Mountain Collective has been impeded by ongoing negotiations with the city, while the other three collectives have been allowed to operate. After decisions being prolonged and no conclusion being drawn, Mountain Collective is left with no option but to sue the city, in order to defend their rights and heavy investment in opening this collective. This lawsuit [that is expected to be filed today in El Dorado

County Superior Court] could definitely go either way, therefore each and every one of our emails, letters, and if we show up to City Council meetings on important days will help to make or to break this case. Blogging online on press articles about what is going on and showing your support of Mountain Collective is also very beneficial. This grassroots approach may be the last chance Mountain Collective has and depends on each and everyone of you reading this and your demonstration of support.

We, as a community, need to write quick emails or letters saying it is about time Mountain Collective be recognized as a collective within the city of South Lake Tahoe. People in the community need to be informed about what has gone on so please spread the word. Mountain Collective needs any and all support, so please step forward. You can email our City Council at hcole@cityofslt.us, cfortier@cityofslt.us, aswanson@cityofslt.us, tdavis@cityofslt.us, and bgrego@cityofslt.us.

The city has a meeting coming up on April 19. Information about agendas is usually posted the Friday before the meeting on their website. City Council members make different decisions in front of a room full of people than they do when no one is in attendance. It is imperative to physically attend meetings. Meetings are at 1901 Airport Road, South Lake Tahoe.

Mountain Collective needs to have friends, family and members of the community standing behind them because they have been treated unfairly by the city of South Lake Tahoe and deserve to be able to open after all of this time of loss profits.

It is time to rectify this situation, which has been drawn out way to long, by helping Mountain Collective get the proper permits and permission to operate as a collective within South Lake Tahoe alongside the City of Angels 2, Tahoe Wellness Center, and Patient to Patient 2. The Zieglers have fully committed themselves to this business and have demonstrated

over the course of the last 20 years their commitment to the local community and economy. Their livelihood, as well as their two young daughters. among others depend on Mountain Collective being officially acknowledged. Denying them the right to operate will be highly detrimental to their family and current employees.

As longtime locals, Chris and Stacie are committed to supporting and revitalizing the economy here. Mountain Collective is run on a closed loop system, which means all medical cannabis is produced in secure, discrete principally industrial areas locally and distributed locally to patients. It will be very clear where all the cannabis is coming from and where it is going. It will all be grown in Clean Green Certified locations which means it will meet Chris Van Hook's statewide Clean Green Certification standards in spaces that meet all local building and safety codes and have appropriate insurance. Clean Green Certification insures products are produced in manner that is both healthy and safe for the environment.

With the proper permission and permits Mountain Collective will be able to create many local jobs. Unemployment levels are reaching all time highs. By employing local people, supporting local businesses with their purchasing needs the economy here will be positively impacted. There is also an opportunity for the city to benefit from taxes. It is scary but true the economy here needs major improvements and to diversify. We really need to open ourselves to new ideas and concepts and support locally owned and operated businesses.

We as a community need to stand up for each other by supporting each others' visions. Let's step in and help Mountain Collective make their vision a reality.

Together healing naturally,

Layla Green, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Questioning billions of bucks for Placer County bridge retrofit

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the April 10, 2011, Auburn Journal.*

Congressman Tom McClintock believes an Auburn dam will be built and as the ranking member of the powerful water and power subcommittee he has considerable clout.

"I am still an Auburn dam supporter," McClintock said during a recent visit with the Journal editorial board. "The only question is whether it will be built before the city of Sacramento is destroyed or after."

When told that the Foresthill Bridge was undergoing a \$79 million earthquake retrofit and paint job, largely paid for by the federal government, McClintock seemed surprised.

"I would say that's not a good use of money," he said.

McClintock explained that the federal highway administration was in charge of bridges, and that money was probably allocated some time ago, before he took office

Spending \$70-million plus on the Foresthill Bridge when there are so many other much more worthy local projects in need of funding is a boondoggle. It's government waste.

Read the whole story