

Opinion: Cut funding to TRPA

By Bruce Grego

As you are aware, on March 15, 2011, I attended a subcommittee meeting of the Nevada Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means committee. My purpose was to express my views concerning future TRPA funding by the state of Nevada.

There were three matters on the agenda, one being considering funding of the TRPA for the next fiscal period. TRPA appeared through their executive director and supporting staff and they made their pitch for funding to support their quest for "protecting the lake."

After TRPA's presentation was made, the executive director and her staff left. After all scheduled presentations were made, which took approximately three hours, comments from the public were allowed.

I then made my presentation and asked the committee to withhold funding from TRPA until the bi-state Compact was changed so that the board members of TRPA were elected by the people in the basin. I explained, among other things, that local representation was token and that the local concerns have not been addressed by the TRPA. I indicated that TRPA policies contributed to the Angora Fire. I stated that land use has, with some limited exceptions, left our City of South Lake frozen with 1960s designs, when we need to compete with other recreational areas of more current designs and facilities. I stated that the TRPA was accountable to no one.

I also pointed out that even though the executive director for TRPA knew who I was, upon the completion of the TRPA presentation at the subcommittee, she and her staff left the committee, to my surprise, with little or no interest in my point of view.

To me, this only further emphasized TRPA's view that the local view and the local complaints about TRPA are irrelevant, and not worthy of their consideration. This incident reminds me of others.

First, last year, with the assistance of then City Manager David Jinkens, I sought to have our mayor present on the podium at the annual environment conference in August. We could not obtain permission despite the fact that senators organizing this conference were contacted, but no one from their staff would grant our request.

Second, our congressman, Tom McClintock, who spoke two years ago at this conference and mentioned the complaints he received from his constituency, was not invited to speak this last year.

Third, the Compact prevents locals from being appointed by state officials entitled to make appointment to the Board (Art III (1)(b) of the Compact).

The deck is stacked against us. Those that created TRPA and those that support its present form, want to be assured that the local views will not be considered, and that balanced regulations will not have to occur.

In short, TRPA is too secure, too smug in their views, and too isolated from democratic checks and balances to consider any opinions other than their own.

I am tired of seeing our local citizens seeking permits for simple projects only to have the permit process become complex and expensive. I am tired of hearing of excessive fines imposed by this agency. I am tired of seeing tax dollars spent on endless general plans and studies for the purpose of keeping those employed by the TRPA in perpetual employment. I am tired of seeing the imposition of their dogmatic philosophies, under the premise of "saving the lake". Most important, I am tired of seeing the total lack of

accountability as this agency continues to pile-on more and more regulations upon our local residents.

I think we deserve a new deal. We should not be asked to live in perpetual stagnation. Expanding families should be allowed to add an extra bedroom to their home, add a deck or even a hothouse (for summer flower and vegetable), even if their properties exceed currently land-coverage, for the cost of added improvements, and no more.

Businesses in our community should be able to repair or improve their properties, and change the footprint of their building, without fear and without paying tribute to the TRPA. New businesses should be encouraged to flourish by not having to face dramatic land coverage reductions of existing developed properties. Permits should be obtainable in days and not in years. The TRPA should allow exceptions to any land use regulations for ADA improvements, including allowing drive up windows for pharmacies and restaurants. TRPA needs to accept the automobile as the people's primary source of transportation and not compel us to use public transportation, if we do not want to.

Forty-two years of this agency's existence is too long, and life is too short to try to fix this agency. This agency does not get it and it never will.

Our time has come.

As you are no doubt now aware, on March 18, 2011, a bill in the Nevada Legislature has been introduced that calls for Nevada's withdrawal of the bi-state Compact, and is designated as SB 271. This is the most important portion of this bill. When either state of California or Nevada withdraws, the Compact is dissolved. The opportunity to end this bi-state Compact is too important to pass up.

I urge all citizens that have had enough of TRPA to actively support this bill, to go to Carson City and express their

support. This is our best opportunity in 42 years to push back and to hope that a better and fair solution to regional planning can be found. Just because TRPA has a choke hold on the Tahoe basin for so long, most of our citizens don't believe a change can happen. But it can.

Please contact me, if you are interested in fighting back. My email address is bgs1t@att.net.

Bruce Grego is a member of the South Lake Tahoe City Council.

Publisher's note: Per Bruce Grego's request, this attached letter is what he gave to the Nevada Legislature.

BRUCE GREGO LETTER – TRPA

Opinion: In truth, 60 is the new 60

By Marc Freedman

By now the story is familiar. A gray wave of aging boomers is crossing into their 60s, hitting retirement age, morphing suddenly into senior citizens, and bringing with them a new era of demographically determined dependency and despair. We're trading baby strollers for walkers and wheelchairs.

Don't believe it. The sixty-somethings headed our way will invent an entirely new stage of life – the encore years – between the end of middle adulthood and anything resembling old age and retirement. We brand them the young-old, or the working-retired. Or maybe just the oxymoronic years.

On one hand, these new-stagers are implored to hang on to their fast-fading youth – 60 is the new 40, we're told. On the other, my pharmacy offers a "senior discount" to anyone over 60. It's either clinging to lost youth or accepting premature aging.

In truth, 60 is not the new 40 any more than it is the new 90. It's the new 60. Indeed, the whole 60- to 80-year-old period is simply new territory, and the people in this period constitute a 21st-century phenomenon.

Marc Freedman is author of The Big Shift: Navigating the New Stage Beyond Midlife, to be published by PublicAffairs.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority deserves praise

By Luther Mack

How soon we forget. Those who are complaining about the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority are not remembering the past.

Thirteen years ago, I was the airport chairman during a turbulent time. In 1998, Airport Director Bob White and his management team were plagued by lawsuits, charges of a hostile work environment, poor planning and citizen outrage.

As chairman, I had to make a difficult business decision. A change in leadership was required. But it came at a price. The airport and White parted company through a unanimously approved severance and consulting agreement that cost the airport \$322,000.

That was the price the board paid to remove an airport director who had failed.

Today, Reno-Tahoe International Airport is an award-winning airport with terrific air service, great facilities and financial planning that are the envy of the community. But today the airport is criticized for paying less for success than it once paid for failure.

Luther Mack is a businessman and former chairman of the Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority board.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Redevelopment subsidy crippling South Lake Tahoe

To the publisher,

The City Council's 1995 decision to subsidize redevelopment debt by giving all of the hotel room taxes in Redevelopment Area 1, Herbert Avenue to Stateline, set the table for the city's economic woes for the last 15 years.

After the 1995 decision, the city manager and the council began a reorganization plan called Destination 2000. As a result, 18 city employees left the city. The finance officer left, and the police chief and fire chief officers were combined into one. The fire chief became the police chief in the dual role.



Bill Crawford

Sometime between the years 2000 and 2002 \$7 million was filched from the city's general fund and given to the Redevelopment Agency. The City Council didn't know about it until after it was disclosed. It was then called a loan.

In 2002, bonds were sold to finance the city garage at 7 percent interest when the going rate for muni bonds was 4 percent. The garage is a millstone around the city's neck and is one of the factors that has led to the city to nearly drown in debt.

Now there's the Hole in the Ground bankruptcy which is the third bankruptcy for redevelopment in South Lake Tahoe.

About a year and half ago while Mr. (Dave) Jinkens was city manager there was another reorganization of the city's workforce. People were terminated. Some were given early retirement. But the subsidy to redevelopment remained whole.

Now there's another attempt by the city to salvage city operations with the Strategic Plan 2011-14. What's new? The plan is one more reorganization somewhat like the Destination 2000 plan, reducing staff, etc. But the gift of \$4 million a year to redevelopment remains intact.

Redevelopment remains the sacred cow. Well, that's politics. Ignore the facts so that the same old stupidities are repeated.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Opinion: Nevada needs to take advantage of its stature

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the March 23, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

If there were any doubts that Nevadans would play an important role in the 2012 presidential race because of the state's early caucuses (and its additional Electoral College vote), Tuesday's visit to the Silver State by Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour should put them to rest.

Barbour is one of a handful of Republicans already testing the waters for a 2012 challenge to Democratic President Barack Obama and one of the first to take a swing through Northern Nevada. (Sarah Palin, the Republican former Alaska governor and vice-presidential candidate, was in Reno for a speech at the Safari Club International convention.)

But he isn't alone in seeing the value of starting to build relationships 11 months before the Republican caucuses, scheduled for Feb. 18, 2012. Already, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, radio talk-show host Herman Cain and former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty all have touched down in Nevada.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Nevada can't afford to abandon TRPA

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the March 24, 2011, Reno Gazette-Journal.*

Let's be clear: Regardless of what happens to Senate Bill 271 in the Nevada Legislature, the state will not be able to walk away from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency pact.

That's because the compact that created the TRPA, signed in 1969 by Gov. Paul Laxalt of Nevada and Gov. Ronald Reagan of California, both Republicans, is not simply an agreement between two states. It is also an agreement with the federal government, which determined that the lake is of special national interest and has provided much of the money used for projects needed to protect the lake from the man-made and natural contamination that has reduced its famous clarity.

An attempt by Nevada to withdraw from the compact is sure to be met with opposition in Congress. If the bill is adopted, Nevada will quickly find itself in the federal court fighting legal actions that it is unlikely to win.

It's a gamble that the state simply cannot afford.

Read the whole story

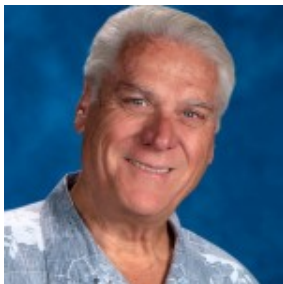
Tarwater explains changes

within LTUSD

Dear Parents:

The current financial maelstrom in the state of California continues to force districts to make painful reductions in order to meet their financial obligations. Lake Tahoe Unified School District has made severe budget reductions over the past two years to the tune of \$4 million – \$1.2 million for 2010-11 alone.

The Board of Education and the Leadership Team have drawn a line in the sand when it comes to eliminating important programs such as K-3 Class Size Reduction, elementary PE, music in grades 4-12, and athletics programs for middle and high school students.



Jim Tarwater

In order to maintain programs, the district offers Golden Handshake Retirement Incentives so positions can be eliminated through attrition, instead of “pink-slipping”.

Such an opportunity has arisen this year with the retirement of the director of Human Resources and Staff Development. More tough decisions need to be made in order to keep as much money as possible at the schools. Therefore, it has become necessary for me to relinquish my duties as principal of LTESMS and to assume the responsibilities of the HR department rather than hiring a replacement.

All administrators have had to take on more responsibility during this financial crisis as we continue to downsize. Therefore, next year, Ryan Galles, principal of Sierra House Elementary, has graciously accepted the duties of principal at LTESMS for the 2011-12 school year. Mr. Galles has a proven track record at Sierra House Elementary and will be able to work with both schools and communities to maintain the high performance and parent involvement that we all expect.

It has been my honor and my pleasure to have opened LTESMS in September 2005 and to have been a part of this amazing school, which has received numerous awards for its outstanding programs and academic excellence. I am proud of the parents and students who have worked cooperatively and collaboratively with the teachers to maximize the students' academic potential as they grow to be productive members of our global society.

I would like you to know that I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the LTESMS community and I will really miss meeting and greeting your son or daughter each morning. It has been a privilege to be your principal over the past six years.

As I say "farewell" at the end of this school year, I will not say "goodbye". I look forward to visiting LTESMS throughout the coming year from time to time and giving "high fives" throughout the year. I also look forward to seeing your children grow and thrive as they move through the middle and high school.

Sincerely,

James R. Tarwater, principal LTESMS and LTUSD superintendent

Opinion: Time to end term limits

By Quentin L. Kopp

In 1990 as a state senator, I supported the concept of term limits because of the foul effects of gerrymandering, and my belief in the notion of citizen legislators – not politicians per se, but people who volunteer for electoral public service as an ideal, not an occupation. I also maintained that legislative turnover would occur only if redrawing of legislative districts was accomplished by a citizens' commission, not by legislators themselves with their innate conflict of interest in ensuring retention. (I didn't support the initiative that ultimately imposed term limits, Proposition 140, however, because I opposed its lifetime limitation and felt a citizen should be able to serve a given number of years, then depart, but with the ability to assay future legislative office.)

In practice, however, term limits has produced a phenomenon different than the "citizen legislator" I envisioned, the civic-minded individual who volunteers for a few years before returning to a profession or business.

Whether legislative staff, lobbyists or state bureaucrats dominate the legislative process (as critics predicted) and exercise more decision-making power under term limits is debatable.

What isn't debatable is that now every term-limited legislator looks instantly for the next elective office, be it state Senate, Assembly, Board of Equalization, Congress, statewide office, county supervisor or otherwise. That constant turnover causes more time, effort and need for soaring political contributions, and results in inexperienced legislators. Has

legislative performance been improved by term limits? Voters can answer that, if provided opportunity to do so.

Quentin L. Kopp is a retired superior court judge and former state senator and former member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Read the whole story

Opinion: TRPA has plenty of room for improvement

By Kenny Curtzwiler

The problem with the TRPA now is they have gotten so far from their original mandate that even they don't remember what it was.

I am really surprised Mayor Hal Cole has not jumped on this as he is a contractor and has several firsthand nightmare stories with them.



Kenny
Curtzwiler

I do feel we need the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, though,

but only in the capacity of enhancing water clarity, i.e.: BMPs, runoff controls, free transportation system and bike paths. No need to be redundant with the city, county, state and federal agencies that are implementing most of the same policy and standards not to mention the League to Save Lake Tahoe and Sierra Club.

I got an award for Best in the Basin a couple of years ago and the following is what I read to the board as an acceptance speech and I don't think it's gotten any better.

Thank you for your recognition and award for the building. This project was the first of its kind in the Tahoe basin and El Dorado County in over 25 years and I honestly hope it will be the last.

There was not one agency I dealt with, and I dealt with over 25 of them through the county of El Dorado alone, that had a clue as to how to go about creating, developing or moving this project forward. That was left up to me.

Only after I submitted something would the agencies begin their mitigation, litigation and extortion of the project. Two agencies, TRPA, specifically Norma Santiago and Dave Landry, and the Meyers Community Plan folks, were the only ones who were proactive in helping me through this project as they showed they cared and were willing to try and get through this nightmare.

Every other agency, specifically El Dorado County and Sierra Pacific Power, I had to deal with all had the same initial reaction and statement – “I can put a stop to this because” and “What a great idea, this is what we need up here” in that order. Due to the overwhelming power of total oversight of all aspects of construction and myriad regulations, it would be easy to put all the blame on the TRPA, but I really want to share the nightmare equally amongst them all. The TRPA has created a monster all their own through the continued

overseeing of every phase of the construction and implementation of all county, city, state and federal rules and regulations. Every phase and fee of this project was doubled due to the fear of the TRPA and all the regulations that could put a stop to my project at any time, the other agencies wanted to be the one to save the environment and damn the TRPA.

The petty squabbling and backstabbing put me in the middle every time I had to deal with it; my lips are sore. To truly understand what I went through and understand my reasoning to never want to see another project like this. I would like the TRPA Governing Board to purchase a lot and build a multi-use, multi-family, commercial and residential property, only in this way can you see the actual effects all your regulations are having on the destruction of this place I call home. We can't have it both ways. Either we save the environment and destroy the local economy up here or we continue development and destroy the lake.

To add a little icing to this cake I am zero and 13 on getting a commercial loan and will probably lose the building anyway. *(I did lose the building to foreclosure as my lender was unwilling to work with me on a 11 percent loan.)* I could not have picked a worse time in history or location to build a future. My sympathies to Randy Lane.

If the true goal of the TRPA is to maintain and increase the clarity of the lake it should take the following steps.

1. Declare a permanent moratorium on all new construction
2. Get out of the construction business and back into the environmental business
3. Place a limit on the number of boats allowed on the lake.

Once again, thank you for this award .

Kenny Curtzwiler owns and operates K&K Services in Meyers.

Looking for students to learn about Lake Tahoe issues

Dear South Lake community,

This coming spring quarter at LTCC I will be teaching GSE 103, Lake Tahoe Issues and Agencies. I believe each of you is familiar with the class, but, in short, it is a survey course of the many agencies and organizations in Lake Tahoe, coupled with the issues affecting the Tahoe community and environment. The class is being offered on Mondays from 6-9pm, starting April 4 and lasting the length of the quarter (excluding Memorial Day).

The last two weeks in the quarter are reserved for student presentations.

I am writing you for your help in getting the word out about this class to you, your friends, colleagues, employees, or anyone who may be new to the Tahoe area and wants to get a handle on what's around them. The class needs 12 students to "go." Currently seven are enrolled.

I look forward to seeing you in April.

Thank you,

Dan Sussman, Lake Tahoe Community College instructor