

January 22, 2024

To the Nevada Legislative Committee on the Oversight of the TRPA:

I lived on the Northshore of Lake Tahoe since 1978, raising my family there while self-employed, serving on the Board of the local public utility district, and developing the only new self-storage facility on the Northshore. Now retired in Reno, I was recently diagnosed with ALS. When one sees the end there is little patience for deception, and there is a longing to “cut to the chase” about the truth however inconvenient.

Your committee has the duty on behalf of all Nevadans to oversee the TRPA, and as a witness to all the good and excesses by the TRPA prior to 2005, nothing compares to how far off the agency has strayed in its plan for the local territory. The “map is not the territory” is a semantic truth, it is worse for a bi-state agency to suppress facts on the ground and generate disinformation to cover up the stark reality of their own deeds.

The TRPA’s staff easily manipulates Board members who turnover frequently, lack specific knowledge of the local territory, and fail to question inappropriate planning models. The executive staff includes Julie Reagan, John Marshall, John Hester, Carl Hasty, Paul Nielson, and Jeff Cowan as collaborators in a vision that perpetuates their own power and demands increasing private and government funding. The following is evidence of this corruption by TRPA that must be stopped.

1) Executive staff promulgating disinformation about a “perception gap” between the public’s complaint about traffic congestion and the reality that vehicle counts are down over the last decade. Yes, there are fewer vehicles in certain areas today due to empty commercial buildings, but in 2018 TRPA installed single-lane roundabouts in Kings Beach reducing capacity by half of what their experts insisted would occur. Now the highway through Kings Beach is a structural bottleneck all summer with mile long queues every day all day and a dangerous chokepoint for evacuation of Incline Village. The staff continues to promote high-density redevelopment as if highway capacity is unlimited.

2) Executive staff has, since 2006, also promulgated misinformation about “best practices” of planning by replacing the National Main Street model for the Northshore with “new urbanism” that promotes high density, mixed-use, pedestrian oriented, transit-oriented growth meant to counter sprawl. Lake Tahoe is not Portland, Oregon nor Reno, Nevada with inevitable growth. The example at South Lake Tahoe that is touted by staff as embodying the high-density model is Heavenly Village, which is adjacent to and dependent upon numerous Stateline casinos and a direct link by gondola to the Heavenly Ski Resort. None of these circumstances exist on the Northshore.

Why does the TRPA staff push this perverse growth model for all of Lake Tahoe? First, because it coincides with the resort industry model of creating high-density “villages” that maximize profits for developers. Second, “new urbanism” or “smart growth” principles have been virtually mandated by Federal (FHWA Transit Oriented) and State (CA Sustainable Communities) agencies as an alternative to sprawl and eligible for massive funding. TRPA has become dependent on these funds (millions of dollars every year) and has fashioned their growth model accordingly despite its contradiction to the reality of

the Northshore and Lake Tahoe (an Outstanding National Resource Water). Third, as traffic problems get worse, TRPA will try to convince the world that they need now more than ever to solve these problems – problems they created.

3) The executive staff has since 2006 helped create various front groups to play a double role that deceives the public. The Tahoe Fund was started by Art Chapman, developer of the Homewood Resort project, as a token environmental group, and the Tahoe Prosperity Center was run by Steve Teshara, who has forever represented local Chambers of Commerce and Resort industries. The Tahoe Science Advisory Council is also now called in to be a loyal supporter of TRPA's growth model. These and many other groups are loyal to the TRPA and its pursuit of high-density growth. The oxymoron "environmental redevelopment" is a constant refrain, and that any "change" is good and necessary.

While this concocted chorus of faux voices support TRPA's vision, the agency is reducing highway capacity, causing serious traffic queues, and failing to recognize the actual consequences of their own projects. Turning a blind eye to reality does not change it. Only 630 vehicles per hour can now move westbound through Kings Beach, and at today's lower level of 19,500 vehicles per day there are already traffic queues into Crystal Bay and into the SR28 junction with SR267. Caltrans count stations provide all the evidence and proof of this problem.

4) The executive staff has manipulated their Trans CAD model (their transportation model required to be used by developers for traffic studies) to show low counts that are not calibrated with current facts in the Basin nor with adjacent models such as in Truckee. The corruption runs deep and out of normal public view.

5) A final example of TRPA's staff failing as a planning agency on the Northshore is that both Washoe County and Placer County (adjacent counties in different states) do not account for the plans or circumstances of each other. Washoe County and NDOT have failed to recognize the TRPA created bottleneck in Kings Beach even though SR28 is the primary evacuation route for Incline Village. The Boulder Bay/WALT project and the Cal Neva renovation will confront traffic queues originating in California that extend to the Stateline. Conversely, Placer County plans several projects in Kings Beach with no recognition of traffic impacts of Boulder Bay/WALT or the Cal Neva. It is as if a blank slate exists on the other side of the Stateline. Only TRPA can correct this, but there is no interest by the executive staff to take responsibility, and it is in their interest to ignore it, bury it, or otherwise pretend it does not exist.

Please stop this on-going abuse of the public governance of Lake Tahoe that is supposed to protect the Lake. As a resident of Nevada, I am asking you to right this wrong, and to expose it and confront it now.

Respectfully yours,

David McClure