



NEVADA LEGISLATURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF THE TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY AND MARLETTE LAKE WATER SYSTEM

(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.555)

DRAFT MINUTES

June 7, 2024

The fourth meeting of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System for the 2023–2024 Interim was held on Friday, June 7, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the Tahoe Room, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's meeting page. The audio recording may also be found at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/>. Copies of the audio record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN STATELINE:

Senator Skip Daly, Chair
Senator Robin L. Titus
Assemblywoman Angie Taylor

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM

Senator Melanie Scheible
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Rich DeLong (Excused)
Assemblyman Ken Gray (Alternate for Assemblyman Rich DeLong) (Excused)

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Alysa M. Keller, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division

Becky Peratt, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division

Christina Harper, Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division

Terese Martinez, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division

Erin Sturdivant, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

Jeffrey Chronister, Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

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*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.
[Indicate a summary of comments.]*

AGENDA ITEM I—CALL TO ORDER

Chair Daly:

[Chair Daly called the meeting to order, and welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the fourth meeting of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System.]

Will the Secretary please call the roll? [Roll call is reflected in Committee Members Present.]

[Chair Daly reviewed meeting and testimony guidelines.]

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Daly:

We will move on to Item II, which is public comment. This is the first public comment period for today. An additional opportunity to make public comment will be available at the end of the meeting. When you are making public comment, please remember to state and spell your name for the record and limit your comments to two minutes. If you run out of time and you have something in writing, you can submit it and it will get uploaded. We will first call for public comment for people that are here and then we will go to the phones. Whoever wants to go first, proceed.

Doug Flaherty, TahoeCleanAir.org:

Chair, Members of the Committee. According to public records, the TRPA and the United States Forest Service have failed to abate up to 750,000 slash piles within the Tahoe Basin. This requires immediate action. I request the Committee to recommend, in the interest of public safety, that the TRPA determine a cumulative hazard pile threshold in the Lake Tahoe Basin and require a publicly transparent abatement planning study from the TRPA and the U.S. Forest Service. I also request the Committee recommend that TRPA develop evacuation thresholds of significance based on data-driven roadway evacuation capacity analysis; and that future development, projects, and code changes are approved only after substantial data driven evidence determines via an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that compliance is achieved within TRPA's eventual evacuation thresholds. I request the Committee investigate the U.S. Forest Service's practice of wildfire use for forest resource purposes within the Lake Tahoe Basin. This practice represents an immediate threat to all living things within the Lake Tahoe Basin. I also request the Committee recommend that the community wildfire protection plan include a recommendation to encourage creation of a Lake Tahoe Basin Joint Powers Authority (JPA) wildfire air attack group. This to build on Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District's efforts through Chief Lindgren's original concept to secure funding to purchase, maintain, and operate at minimum at least two multiuse helicopters with night flight capabilities, as well as supporting ongoing funding for the required crew. Do I have any more time? Thank you. (Agenda Item II A)

Ellie Waller, Nevada Resident:

Overarching comments on agenda items V through VIII. Land development is an inevitable action. Infrastructure and buildings, after all, have become synonymous with jobs and

commerce—a self-propelling engine of never-ending growth. But such growth comes at what cost? Suburban and commercial sprawl in the Tahoe Basin with over-tourism, precarious water resources for wildfire response, habitat loss, evacuation uncertainty, and wildfire inevitability. The answer may lie on the other side of the coin—degrowth. A quote from a recent article I read: “Degrowth does not necessarily reject capitalism, rather it brings an awareness; and rampant economic expansion without proper planning has serious human and environmental consequences.” The TRPA and local Tahoe Basin jurisdictions, in my opinion, have refused to acknowledge carrying capacity issues whilst always having their hands out for federal and other funding sources to cure the incurable issues of gridlock with a broken transportation system, water quality issues that do not address causal effects, and create terms like “sustainable recreation” that does what? Why is not TRPA, the U.S. Forest Service, and endless emergence of nonprofits with non-elected officials held to a higher standard and assigned deliverables when receiving federal/state grants and funding? While TRPA acknowledges threats from climate change and wildfire, it is also pushing for the increased building height and density with little to no parking for new structures, modifying thresholds for scenic standards, and exemptions to groundwater inception. Why? To entice developers and pack more people into the Basin already straining under the weight of some 25 million visitors. (Agenda Item II B)

Shelly Thomsen, Tahoe Water for Fire Suppression Partnership:

Good afternoon, Committee Members. My name is Shelly Thomsen. I work for South Tahoe Public Utility District. We do the water and sewer on the south side of the Lake. But today, I would like to talk to you as the lead for the Tahoe Water for Fire Suppression Partnership. This Partnership falls underneath the umbrella of TRPA's Environmental Improvement Program (EIP); a program that has been really successful at getting incredible restoration projects on the ground throughout the Basin; and a piece of that is water infrastructure. We think a lot about forest health and aquatic invasive species, but a key component for me—I am a little biased, working in water infrastructure—is that upsizing water infrastructure for fire suppression protects our communities. I just wanted to come before you today to say that having the EIP—having TRPA lead these collaborative efforts, including the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team that we fall underneath—it allows, in the water world, 20 private and public water agencies on the California and Nevada side to meet regularly to prioritize these Water for Fire partnerships. We have been very successful at receiving federal funding, and obviously are always trying to go after State funding to supplement our local efforts. But really, the TRPA has been very important for helping bring these partners together, come up with a prioritized list, so that when we spend federal and State dollars using local match, therefore, the highest priority projects to protect the Basin. Thank you for your time.

Ronda Tycer, Incline Village Resident:

I am not a climate denier nor a climate alarmist, but I do know climate is the hot topic, and it is big business. It is where the money is. And right now, if TRPA wants money, TRPA staff needs to emphasize and comply with California and Nevada climate agendas. However, we have just learned that climate and greenhouse gasses are not the most important factors affecting Lake Tahoe's deteriorated water quality. Per scientific evidence presented in last year's State of the Lake Annual Report, the lessening of invasive Mysis shrimp and the subsequent increasing of native zooplankton had more to do with lake clarity than any human activity. The change in zooplankton increased Lake Tahoe water clarity year over year by an amazing ten feet. Neither I, nor anyone else, knows to what extent climate change is affecting Lake Tahoe's clarity. Even Dr. Geoffrey Schladow, who wrote the *State of the Lake Report*, says he knows of no relationship between vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) and lake clarity. And yet TRPA and Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) must focus a

goodly portion of their efforts on climate-related measures, because that is where the money is. But if climate is not the most important factor affecting Lake clarity, then TRPA and TTD's intense climate-focused efforts are misguided. That includes increasing density in town centers, extending hiking/biking trails, and getting people on buses all to reduce VMT. Maybe the focus should be on finding out why the Mysis shrimp disappeared and making sure they do not come back. Thank you. (Agenda Item II C)

Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance:

At the first Oversight Committee in January, Julie Regan told you that the TRPA has many multiples of goals, and that it has to harmonize all those goals with no order. If there is anything we want you to take away from our comments, it is that Julie Regan's comments are the exact reason why the TRPA is failing. Many of the TRPA's goals are conflicting, and there simply has to be prioritization of goals or the Lake will flounder. The TRPA was formed with one purpose—to protect the Lake. That is the ultimate goal. Protecting the Lake cannot have the same priority as tourism. But today, tourism is more important at the TRPA than the Lake. To me, the TRPA's top two goals should be protecting the Lake and the safety of all who live at the Lake and come to visit. Today we will be talking about wildfire evacuation. Here is a classic example of the TRPA getting all caught up in its underwear with its conflicting goals. For the past two years, the residents of the East Shore have been fighting TRPA's efforts to reduce much of Highway 50 to two lanes, so it could add a bike lane. We fought this plan because a two-lane Highway 50 would have made wildfire evacuations a complete disaster. But the TRPA did not care about that issue because of mismanagement of its goals. When it comes time to write your final report, there is nothing more important that you could do than tell the TRPA it simply must prioritize its goals and treat the Lake and public safety as its ultimate and foremost goals. Finally, I would like to incorporate my July 5th email to you all regarding Zephyr Cove Beach into these comments. Thank you. (Agenda Item II D)

Robert Byren, Resident of Hidden Woods, Nevada:

I am a resident of Hidden Woods on the East Shore of Lake Tahoe. Like many in our community, I am concerned about the threat of wildfires in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and I am pleased that the Oversight Committee has included forest health and evacuation planning as part of today's agenda. The Caldor Fire has served as a stark reminder that the Tahoe Basin is particularly vulnerable to wildfires. We are surrounded by an overgrown national forest. Our evacuation response during Caldor was a miserable failure. Our firefighting infrastructure lacks the personnel and high elevation air assets to fight a major fire, and our evacuation egress corridors are few and well under-capacity. That said, Nevada State and Douglas County officials have recently established U.S. 50 as a primary four-lane evacuation corridor. However, the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), U.S. 50 East Shore Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and the TRPA "7-7-7" Transportation Plan still call for a three-leg roundabout at the U.S. 50 and SR 28 intersection, with no bypass provision for wildfire evacuation. Earlier this year, we proposed an alternative configuration, a grade separation, trumpet style interchange. Scott Hein, NDOT's Assistant Director for Engineering, confirmed that this approach would be included in the intersection control evaluation for Spooner Junction, but no action to date. While both intersection configurations support the zero-vision action plan, the trumpet style configuration has several significant advantages. First, it eliminates left turn movements, improving traffic flow in all directions. Second, it eliminates weaving movements within the proposed traffic circle, avoiding a particular class of non-lethal accidents. Third, it eliminates crossing movements for bicycles and pedestrians. Finally, and most importantly, it facilitates high-capacity wildfire evacuation, without the need for additional bypass lanes and lane

reconfigurations. The downside is cost. Nevada's Department of Transportation has already built a trumpet interchange on the Carson Valley side of U.S. 50 at Golf Club Drive. Given the documented need for improved safety, Spooner Summit intersection, and future plans for a new mobility hub, we are asking that the TRPA support, financially, and otherwise, the construction of a second trumpet interchange at Spooner Junction, [inaudible] transportation plan. Thank you.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance:

Hi, good afternoon, thanks for coming here. You are hearing the same old narrative on the same repetitive issues. The TRPA says fire evacuation and the environment are under control. The public says things are not under control. What are you to make of this circular discussion? Amazingly, how about the taking a seat of the pants view? How do you see Lake Tahoe in five to ten years? Do you think there will be more or less traffic? Amazingly, TRPA does not consider surrounding growth in Reno and Carson in their data. When it is 100 degrees outside, do you think the people in thousands of units in Reno and Carson will drive to Tahoe to escape the heat? The TRPA does not have a plan to manage short-term rentals or tourism, although many tourist destinations around the world do. The TRPA does not deal with microplastics in our water, although Tahoe had the third highest concentration of plastic of 38 lakes tested around the world. The TRPA still allows plastic bags, plastic piers, and plastic erosion control. The TRPA says it wants to promote affordable housing, yet they approve luxury condos. What has TRPA come up with? More tourism, quasi-governmental partners, the Prosperity Center, Tahoe Fund, North Tahoe Community Alliance—the same 2010 TRPA team that promoted “more than” at the regional plan is at it again, the same old failed policies, now with even more high-density coverage and less parking are proposed. It did not work the last 14 years and it will not work now; is not that consistent with the definition of insanity? All we are left with are the scars of these failed policies: Boulder Bay is in foreclosure; TRPA-promoted projects are too big to finance or develop—so nothing happens. How can Nevada governance help? Tahoe Regional Planning Agency funding needs to be more directly tied to results that protect the Tahoe environment and the original purpose of TRPA, to be an environmental watchdog. (Agenda Item II E)

Gavin Feiger, Policy Director, League to Save Lake Tahoe:

Good afternoon, Committee Chair and Members. Thanks for taking the time to come up today; hopefully it is a little bit cooler than wherever you came from. I want to have some brief comments focusing on the EIP, which you will hear about a little bit later today, and how science-based environmental thresholds can help even further implement the EIP. So, TRPA is doing a great job managing the EIP. There are a ton of partners (80 plus), several committees (maybe even a dozen), various funding streams; and TRPA staff does pull it together year after year, helps implementers get projects on the ground, and brings in money to the Basin for our highest needs. In our role as environmental watchdog both over and along with TRPA, we work to make sure that EIP projects help reach Basin goals, so they really do achieve our highest priority goals around the environment, and to make sure that adequate funding for these projects is available. We are recommending one strategic adjustment to the EIP, and that is tying it more closely to environmental thresholds. Thresholds are kind of a wonky science thing, but they do guide everything TRPA does. That is what TRPA's regional plan was designed to achieve and maintain, and all the plans and efforts underneath it. Tying that more closely to the EIP, how projects achieve thresholds, how many thresholds you may achieve, and how much progress a project might make to achieving thresholds—we would like to see that prioritized even more through the EIP. And on the science side, our experts at the League, we work really closely with the Science Council and with TRPA staff to make sure that the thresholds are science based, that they

are understandable, that they are measurable, and that they are meaningful. We have too many right now; we need to cut them down, make it more meaningful. We have been in a lot of discussions with TRPA staff about that. And I thank you for your time and hope that the thresholds will be integrated more.

Chair Daly:

You are at your two minutes. Thank you.

Elisabeth Lernhardt, Zephyr Cove Resident:

Senators, State Assembly people—TRPA, as well as the Forest Service, are openly disregarding the safety of the residents—the latter by their Burn Back Better policy and the former by putting grant money over safety in pushing Complete Streets and Road Diets. I am attaching a publication calling for grant proposals to things like Road Diets and Complete Streets that was just released by the federal agency. It would be more important for fire safety to mandate things like electrical utility lines to be underground. In California, 19 percent of wildfires were caused by power lines between 2016 and 2020, as was the Camp Fire. And after that Paradise disaster, the electrical utility companies were receiving billions of money, and this is information from our local Fire Department. All they did in Tahoe was to hold some public meetings and disseminate questionable information, along the line like, “We do not have high winds up here.” Besides thousands of trees being used as electrical poles in violation of all codes that exist in both states, they refuse to do anything about it. I personally had a pole like that, and when it became a problem, I had to threaten them, with my neighbors, to put a metal pole up there—so it would not cause a fire and damage our houses. Why is it left to individual owners to take these matters in their own hands? Like Glenbrook, they are undergrounding their lines and paying for it themselves. Where is TRPA's leadership in this issue? Thank you so much. (Agenda Item II F)

Caitlin Meyer, Chief Program Officer, Tahoe Fund:

Good afternoon, Chairman, Members of the Committee. We are a nonprofit that raises philanthropic dollars to contribute the private match to the EIP here in the Lake Tahoe Basin. I am here today to reiterate to you all that we are so happy to be a part of the EIP, and we are standing by continuing to provide that private match. Since we were founded in 2010, we have raised over \$20 million private dollars to go toward 160 environmental improvement projects around the Basin. Our \$20 million has helped leverage \$120 million in public dollars, and that is really the role that we hope to serve, as an asset to you and an asset to our partners—the 80 of which were mentioned earlier by Gavin. Our number one priority is forest health. I think the way we see it—the way our Board sees it—if Tahoe burns down, none of the rest of the stuff we are trying to do really matters. I think you know better than anybody, our forests need help. They are overly dense; they are dying en masse. They need some attention; they need some love. Since we were founded, we have contributed about \$1 million in private funds to forest health projects, and we are committed to continuing to do good work. I think another thing we want to put out there today is that TRPA's leadership in facilitating the EIP has helped us see success in the forest health space, particularly in terms of bringing innovation into this space. Just last month, with TRPA's enormous assistance, we were able to bring the Burn Bot to Lake Tahoe. The Burn Bot is an innovative, cool technology that was created by really smart former Hotshots and tech folks; and we were able to complete a 22-acre treatment in three days up in Incline, that otherwise would have taken two weeks with conventional methods. This is keeping residents safe, it is making our forest healthier, and it is all a product of the EIP and

the partnerships here. So, thank you so much for everything you are doing to advance the EIP, and just know that you have got a private match standing by ready to help. Thank you.

Laura Koscki:

Zephyr Cove—I would like to address this Resort. Zephyr Cove had a multiple gang knife fight on Memorial weekend. I spoke with an employee I used to work with there, and he said it was horrible. There was a lack of security, no lifeguards, underage drinking, gun holdups, campground guests were concerned for their safety, and I am advising that you revoke their certificate due to the ongoing gross negligence at that Resort. In Meyers, the snowmobile operation has an encroachment and now you cannot even get into the Post Office. They are leaving their trash and cigarette butts all over. This million-dollar bash for July 4th, there is no reason for it. Aramark, the parent company makes \$15 billion, you can Google it. The whole time I was there as a manager, it was high turnover, increase in accidents, and rather than pay wages, they would rather pay out on lawsuits. This court-ocracy is running through our town. They are cutting hours now with the minimum wage being increased—low wages. I feel like they could implement middle managers about 150,000 to help out to make sure that everybody is safe, and they would have a more quality resort environment. The cloud seeding happened basically when we met last time and there was another pile up on Kingsbury. Two days after our last meeting, the tow truck slid off and they had road closure; the accident was pretty horrible. Harvey's Casino, there are summer concerts. They had 30 overdoses at Jack Johnson, 20 overdoses at Dave Matthews in one night. I was a security officer there trying to help out, kids' eyes rolled, tongues hanging out, not enough oxygen tanks; we were running around trying to get wheelchairs from other—.

Chair Daly:

You are out of time; you are at your two minutes. Thank you.

Robert Aaron, Tahoe Resident:

I want to thank the Committee and the Oversight Council for your time here today. First off, my motto is: learn something, know something, do something. And I hope you all do something. First off, I think we can all see that there is a huge community outreach that has been going on for all of your meetings against the TRPAS's decisions. I want to go back—you guys hold the purse strings for the TRPA. I want to point directly to, I guess Ms. Regan, because she has been leading it for a while. Third most polluted body of water in the world—that just does not set over well with anything that they been doing. I hope she is not heading for first. I think we need to investigate the five cities or lakes that did come out as the cleanest and figure out what they are doing, because the amount of dollars spent on cleaning up this Lake—I mean, it is unimaginable. That money could have gone to the community and really doing something at the Lake. As I say, there are so many different things. The Tahoe Fund, their gap analysis—I want any of you to read it—they say white, rich people are keeping minorities and blacks and immigrants from enjoying the great outdoors in Lake Tahoe. I take offense to that. That is the Tahoe Fund. That is Mr. Chapman. Is it Art Chapman? And the fine young lady dressed very nicely. I just take total offense to you. There are so many different things here. The Lake is why we are all here. They have not been doing their job. They were here to protect the Lake. They are developers now; I work at one of them. It is embarrassing. I feel sorry walking around my community now, I have been here 30 plus years. I am at the point where my kids have graduated; my daughter is in Hawaii; my son is in San Diego. I am ready to head to Costa Rica, because this place is turning into a third world dumping ground. I look out in

front of Ale Works Bar right here at Stateline. The streets and the gutters around there—they look like Vegas and that was 25 years ago that I went to Las Vegas. I do not want Lake Tahoe to turn into San Francisco. Thank you for your time.

Kristina Hill, Lake Tahoe Resident:

Good afternoon. As a former TRPA employee and environmental land use planning consultant for 40 years and a full-time Lake Tahoe resident since 1980, I have seen a lot of changes to the TRPA. The Agency that used to be run by environmental scientists is now run by public relations people. Currently, there is a major problem in the Tahoe Basin due to over-tourism. Too many visitors creating too much litter, pollution, and traffic congestion; making wildfire evacuation near to impossible, which is the topic on your agenda today. However, TRPA and their fellow agencies like the Prosperity Center, Destination Stewardship, and the Tahoe Fund are all doing best to advocate for new attractions for the masses of tourists, including, but not limited to: constructing new bigger parking lots on the East Shore, so more people can cram onto the small beaches; approving new bigger hotel casinos like the Waldorf Astoria and Crystal Bay, seven times larger than the Tahoe Biltmore; amending the local area plans to facilitate 70-foot high massive developments, like 39 Degrees North in Kings Beach, which includes a 179 room hotel, 38 town homes, 62 achievable housing units with no income caps—so they are unlikely to be used for workforce housing—restaurants, and retail shops. These are just a few examples of the new accommodations that will draw even more people to our sensitive Basin, undermining the founding mission of TRPA—protecting the environment and water quality of Lake Tahoe. Please consider the harmful direction TRPA is heading by cutting or eliminating funding to the Agency, which has run amok. Thank you. (Agenda Item II G)

Chair Daly:

Thank you. Do we have any other people wishing to make public comment here in person? I am not seeing any. Broadcast and Production Services (BPS), if we have people on the phone, we are ready to hear from them.

BPS:

Thank you, Chair Daly. To provide public comment, please press *9 on your phone now to take your place in the queue.

Monica Eisenstecken, Private Citizen:

The TRPA puts money before the safety of the community; TRPA cares more about development and tourism than the safety of the community, and cell towers are case in point. Proliferation of cell towers in Lake Tahoe to profit off data usage from tourism is no secret. There is big money in this, but at what cost? Sure, we need some cell towers for communicating, but do they make sure these devices meet all safety codes and standards for fire, flood, seismic, and wind? Or are they ticking time bombs? We are at risk—high risk for electrical fires. This is not the fireworks you look up and say, “Oh wow, how pretty!” This is our community burning up in flames. Are we prepared? Why are we not having meaningful discussions about evacuations and wildfires for electrical fires? The TRPA approved multiple cell towers in South Lake Tahoe. These were fast tracked without NEPA or CEQ reviews. Telecoms care more about their short-term profits and share prices than the health of our children. So, the question is has the TRPA hired independent electrical or structural engineers to ensure these devices are safe? Can TRPA prove they have complied with all safety requirements and standards required by law? My family lives here; we do not want our safety compromised for TRPA profits. The reason every cell tower is at risk is

because, in most instances, the telecoms are installing these dangerous devices without oversight or enforcement. Wow, I do not feel safe, do you? We cannot trust our lives and property with this model. Cell tower fires differ from others in that every electrical device must be de-energized before a fire can be put out. It takes anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes or more for the electric company to cut the power. Firefighters trying to put out electrical fires before de-energized can be electrocuted. If a firefighter fights the fire before the tower is de-energized, they are at a huge risk. This gives the community no time to escape. Very basically, every cell tower is an electrical device. At some point, every electrical device will fail, which can result in fire. What is the purpose of the Oversight Committee if you are not overseeing any—

Chair Daly:

You are at your two minutes, if you can wrap up, please? Thank you.

Dana Tibbets:

United States Forest Service (USFS) Chief, Randy Moore's new letter of intent has provoked revolt in the firefighting community for good reason. Strong initial attack and "First, Put Out The Fire" have given way to rampant wildfire use and so-called "managed wildfire," that burns much longer and hotter than needed, at great expense to homeowners and their insurers. The colossal fiasco of Caldor, Tamarack, and Dixie proved the point. They were allowed to burn for months, consuming nearly 1.3 million acres of Sierra Nevada Forest. The cost of Caldor damages alone ran in the billions in the Basin, not including trees and wildlife loss or damages to 1,200 residents displaced from their homes. You should know burning a million acres a year is a standing order for the USFS in California and other states. The wholesale use of "managed wildfire" under the guise of forest health, resilience, and restoration is scarring landscapes, devastating forests, and leaving vast lifeless ecosystems with few signs of recovery. Twenty-five percent of California's national forests are gone, and we will never get them back. The charred remains of scorched earth along U.S. 50's burn corridor are a grim reminder of what Lake Tahoe used to be, before it went to hell in a handbasket. Burn Back Better is not working. I am asking you today to take one measure to fend off more fire aggression in the Basin. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's long list of exempt memorandums of understanding (MOUs) gives USFS free range to do as they see fit, without TRPA review, as long as they deem their actions to be in conformity with your TRPA standards. We can do no longer afford to have TRPA give away its authority, agency, and responsibility to properly review all actions, especially those involving fire and other threats to the environment. Please terminate the USFS MOU exemption immediately. (Agenda Item II H)

Pamela Tsigdinos, Full-time Resident, North Lake Tahoe, Nevada:

Many of us receive in advance the evacuation presentations you will see today. With all due respect, the current plans are woefully deficient. They rely on out-of-date information and mislead by offering a false sense of security. Lake Tahoe is a geographic area where the threat of loss of life and property is not being adequately analyzed or planned for by TRPA and local government who are responsible for the protection of residents, workers, and visitors. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's repeated references and reliance on a 2012 analysis ignores current realities and fails to analyze the actual carrying capacity of the mostly single lane roads around and into Lake Tahoe. We look to you, our representatives, for leadership. Lake Tahoe desperately needs the Oversight Committee to protect visitors, workers, and residents. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's approvals and recent actions aid at increasing height and density all around the Lake will further adversely

impact the limited evacuation routes. A current analysis must be done. I urge the Oversight Committee to prioritize Lake public safety and condition any funding to TRPA first by making TRPA provide a comprehensive and updated environmental analysis. We need this for recent and future development. Communities and residents from all areas around Lake Tahoe have repeatedly asked to prioritize and budget for a reality-based evacuation plan that reflects peak visitation, congestion, and ongoing roadwork and construction. We cannot rely on outdated documents. (Agenda Item II I)

Chair Daly:

You are at your two minutes, please wrap up.

Ms. Tsigidinos:

Thank you very much. We need your help to prevent tragic loss of life.

BPS:

If you have joined the call and would like to provide public comment, please press *9 on your phone now to take your place in the queue. Chair, there are no additional public comment callers at this time.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. With that, we will close the first period of public comment. We will have a second one at the end of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON MAY 3, 2024

Chair Daly:

We will move on the Item III, the approval of the minutes for the May 3, 2024, meeting. All members were emailed the link to the draft minutes, provided in advance. If there are any comments or questions, now is the time. If not, I will take a motion.

SENATOR TITUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON MAY 3, 2024.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TAYLOR SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA ITEM IV—UPDATE REGARDING MARLETTE LAKE WATER SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Chair Daly:

We will move on to Item IV, which is an update regarding the Marlette Lake Water System operations and capital improvement projects (CIPs). I believe we have Wilfred Lewis and Brian Wacker. Feel free to proceed when you are ready.

Wilfred J. Lewis Jr., Administrator, State Public Works Division:

Good afternoon, Chair Daly, and Committee Members. I have with me, Brian Wacker, our Deputy Administrator, and also Bob Ragar, our Division's Chief of Planning. Also, not with us today is the Division's new Deputy Administrator of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Kent Choma. Kent's first day of work is this coming Monday; so he gets a pass today. A key component of the State of Nevada Public Works Division is Buildings and Grounds, which is responsible for the oversight—the management of the Marlette Lake Water System. Some of you may recall we had the opportunity to present to this Committee back in January 2024. As part of the presentation today, we want to give a brief discussion of the history of the System, as well as major components and stakeholders, to provide context for a discussion of the current circumstances regarding the Lake, as well as all of the groups that benefit from the System, for the purpose of focusing on the current status of the System, ongoing projects we are going to talk about, as well as the CIP projects that will be requested in our 2025 CIP session. Along those lines, we will spend time providing an update on the Marlette Dam rehabilitation and the impact that System has on the entire water system, as well as the stakeholders involved. With that being said, I am going to turn it over to Brian Wacker, our Deputy Administrator, to take you through a few slides.

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Brian Wacker, Deputy Administrator, State Public Works Division:

As Administrator Lewis mentioned, I will first briefly give an overview of the Marlette Lake Water System. This System is the sole source of water for Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City in Storey County. Most of the System's water is sold to Carson City, for which it provides approximately 25 percent of the City's water. The Marlette Lake Water System dates back to 1873 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was purchased by the State of Nevada in 1963. There is an estimated 8,077-acre feet of potential water in the system. However, average annual sales amount to 1,531-acre feet to Carson City and 277-acre feet to Storey County.

Here is a list of the major components that comprise the System. As a reminder, items in the left column are owned and operated by the State of Nevada; the items in the right column are owned and operated by Storey County. It is easier for me to explain the System in map view, so please orient yourself with Lake Tahoe on the left side of the page and Carson City on the right side. The System starts with Marlette Lake; an intake structure on the northwest side of the Lake pumps water into Hobart Reservoir. Water from Hobart Reservoir flows to Diversion Dam, where it is joined by flows from the East Slope catchments. Water from Diversion Dam is piped to the Lakeview tanks where flow is split either to Carson City or Storey County. Storey County's water is conveyed through the historic siphon, while Carson's water flows by gravity pipelines.

The Marlette Lake Dam is a 33-foot-high earthen structure constructed in the 1870s and holds 11,780-acre feet of water. I would like to remind the Committee with these pictures that this Lake sits at about 7,800 feet above sea level. It looks very different in summer and winter. The bottom picture is from when work crews helicoptered to the dam in 2017 to dig out the spillway after heavy spring snow. Hobart Reservoir Dam is a 24-foot-high earthen structure constructed in the 1870s that holds 35 million gallons of water. This dam breached in 1956, which is why the stones facing the dam shown in the historic picture on the bottom are gone today.

The East Slope catchments form another important part of the System and consist of concrete boxes that collect spring runoff. The East Slope water is clean and high quality, but flows vary greatly throughout the year. The pictures you see on the top of the slide are the old catchments. The pictures on the bottom of the slide are the catchments that have been improved in the last five years. These improved catchments help collect more spring water from the East Slope that we can provide to our customers.

The Diversion Dam structure combines water from Marlette, Hobart, and East Slope components and was recently upgraded with a CIP approved in the 2021 Legislative Session. The Lakeview Tank serves to split flows between Carson City and Storey County and is the start of the siphon. Water flows to Carson City through the pipeline from the Lakeview Tank toward the City's Quill Water Treatment Plant. Finally, water to Storey County flows through Storey's section of the siphon into the Five-Mile Reservoir. I know that was a mouthful but thank you for letting me refresh the Committee on the system.

As another reminder, the Marlette Lake Water System has many beneficiaries beyond water sales and is notably a recreation destination managed by Nevada State Parks that receives 2 million visitors annually. Marlette Lake is also an important resource for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, which provides fish eggs used to stock lakes throughout Nevada.

Here is a list of recent improvements to the System for the Committee's information. We will move on to our current improvements. The East Slope Transmission Upgrade is a \$9 million project that upsizes three miles of transmission main. Please look at the picture on the upper right. Much of this pipeline is currently above ground and exposed to hazards. This project will replace the pipeline and put it safely underground—there are not that many pipelines above ground; this is one of them. The next project installs three additional catchments for \$1.4 million. These projects will increase the amount of water delivered by the East Slope. Design of both of these projects is nearing completion and construction is anticipated to start towards the end of the summer and be complete by fall of 2025. The Hobart Reservoir Dam Rehabilitation is a \$14 million project supported by a \$10 million federal grant to provide seismic and functional upgrades to the dam. Design is ongoing and the project is anticipated to be completed in summer 2026. The Pump Generator Renovation is a \$560,000 project to renovate the bottom end of the generator that pumps water from Marlette Lake. It is anticipated to be complete in summer 2025.

I am excited to share the status of the Marlette Lake Dam Rehabilitation Project with the Committee. This is a \$24 million project with a \$10 million federal grant to provide seismic and functional upgrades to this dam, which dates back to the 1870s. Design has been ongoing for several years and is nearing completion with final permit acceptances in sight. We are hoping to receive grant funding this fall, finalize the construction contract, and start work in 2025—that is why I am excited. This project provides several needed improvements to the dam, including replacement of the existing low-level outlets and valves; replacement of the emergency spillway; a 2.6-foot increase to the dam crest to increase the structure's safety; and buttressing of the downstream side for seismic stability. The section shown here is a simple representation of the work. The shaded areas are where additional material will be added, which is what I meant by buttressing. The outlet replacement replaces pipes located at the bottom of the structure, which is represented by the dash lines on this figure.

I want you now to look at the boxes at the right hand of the figure, these represent a temporary dam of water-filled berms to be installed at the beginning of this project. The water level in Marlette Lake will be dropped 22 feet to facilitate this installation. This element of the project is required for the excavation and replacement of the outlet pipes

which are located at the bottom of Marlette Lake Dam. The drawdown is anticipated to begin this winter, which will allow construction to start in spring 2025. I want the Committee to be aware that we anticipate six years will be needed for the Lake to fully recharge. We have done extensive coordination with the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) fisheries programs and other stakeholders to coordinate the Lake's recharge. The drawdown will not impact the System's ability to deliver water to Storey County, but will impact water delivery to Carson City, and this will have an impact on Marlette Lakes' operating budget. We have been coordinating with Carson City, Storey County, and the State budget processes.

The final thing I want to discuss on this project is public access around the site. The contractor will access the site primarily from the North Canyon Road, which is the road between Spooner Lake and Marlette Lake. The road will have to be shut down for safety periodically during construction; however, we are planning alternate trails and access parallel to the North Canyon Road, the Flume Trail, and Marlette Lake for the public. The project team is planning public outreach this fall and winter to communicate the project schedule and impacts with our State and private partners. Now, I would like to turn it over to Bob Rager, Chief of Planning, to talk about future improvements.

Bob Rager, Chief of Planning, State Public Works Department:

Thank you, Deputy Administrator Wacker, Chair Daly, and Committee Members. Now that Deputy Administrator Wacker has briefed you all on the history, some major components, and a few of the ongoing and recently completed Marlette Lake Water System projects, I would like to tell you a little bit about what is coming down the pipe, so to speak. As you have recently heard, the State Public Works Division is currently in the 2025 CIP vetting process. State Public Works Division Project managers are currently scoping and estimating nearly 650 CIPs. Three of which propose much needed improvements to the components of the Marlette Lake Water System. The first of these CIP projects will address two of the items on this slide: the Sawmill Transmission Main Upgrade and the Lakeview to Carson City Transmission. This advanced planning project will provide for the design of the replacement of approximately eight miles of 70-year-old water transmission pipe from the Diversion Dam north of Hobart Reservoir to the Sawmill site. Then from the Lakeview water tank to Carson City's water treatment facility. This pipe is at the end of its useful life and is prone to leaks and is in desperate need of attention, as evidenced by the pipe.

This CIP process is constantly changing throughout its life; and this being my first attempt at it this year, I am getting a real good picture of how it changes from day to day. In fact, this week a project was proposed to design and construct Marlette pump inlet improvements that previously was not on this list. It wound up on this proposed operating budget list. The scope of this project is still being determined. We will have to wait and see if any other items on this slide wind up in consideration for funding come January.

The third and final project I would like to mention provides for much-needed office site upgrades. The Marlette Lake Water System office in the Lakeview area is unsecured; and this project will design and construct drainage improvements, asphalt paving, an LED lighting upgrade, a security system including fencing, and an access gate. When completed, these projects will allow for increased capacity, reliability, and security of clean water delivery to Storey County and Carson City. As we navigate through the CIP process, I am encouraged and excited by the efforts of State Public Works Division staff, and all that Marlette Lake Water System partners and stakeholders have put forward to get stuff done. With that, I would like to turn it back over to Administrator Lewis.

Administrator Lewis:

We certainly do appreciate the time we have to spend with the Committee, but I want to make one closing statement; that as a State, we have a good relationship with Carson City, as well as with Storey County. I am pleased to report to the Committee that we are in discussions to finalize our water sales agreements between the three, as well as the maintenance of the Marlette Water System. With that being said, I also would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to take a tour. We normally run tours in the summer. Please contact my office, and we can make that arrangement for you. If you have any questions, we will entertain them at this time.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. I will open it up for questions from the Committee Members first. I see Senator Titus leaning in already, so please proceed.

Senator Titus:

I have a couple of questions. First, on the drawdown, you are going to do that over the winter of 2024 to 2025. Are you going to store that water in another location for use? How are you going to draw that? Where are you going to put that water?

Mr. Wacker:

The water will be discharged through the regular outlet valves from the dam, so it will discharge down into Lake Tahoe.

Senator Titus:

That water is going to go directly into Lake Tahoe.

Mr. Wacker:

Correct, it will go directly into Lake Tahoe. There is a little bit of a creek that it flows through first, but it will go directly into the Lake.

Senator Titus:

Are you going to draw it down completely? There is a fishery there. What association do you have with NDOW about moving the fish, or what is going to happen there?

Mr. Wacker:

We have done a lot of coordination with the NDOW fishery program. When the Lake is drawn down, they will not be able to do their spawn. They did their spawn last year in anticipation of this project and will resume when the water comes up again. When I said we are drawing the Lake down, we are not going to drain it completely out—this draw down represents about half the water in the reservoir. Basically, the way it works is you draw the Lake down and then we will wait for it to come back up as nature provides water over the winters.

Senator Titus:

As you draw it down—if I might Mr. Chair continue along this line—I am concerned. Since you are drawing it down—fish are going to survive but will not be able to spawn. I get all

that. You are not saving the water, just setting it back—in some ways you are redirecting the water to more of a natural process for that water anyway, right? If you did not have those dams there, it would be flowing that way. Since you are drawing it down, are you planning on any other maintenance besides doing that dam work? Along maybe the pipeline or any of those things? Will that not be affected?

Mr. Wacker:

During this project, we are doing the functional upgrades to the dam. Along with that, there is going to be a lot of other work at the dam. There is going to be Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) controls and other improvements of the dam itself. I think what the Chief of Planning and Mr. Ragar mentioned is we are looking at the intake structure at Marlette Lake and taking the opportunity to upgrade that while the water is down; it might actually be most of the way out of the water during the middle of this project. We are looking at that. I know our folks at NDOW have looked at other things with the fish spawning facilities at Marlette Lake, where this would be an opportunity for them to perform upgrades at the same time.

Senator Titus:

Final question. Do you have that in your budget, so you will not have to come before us in Interim Finance Committee (IFC) to have additional budget items to do these repairs when it is drawn down? Or are you already planning those in your budgetary process?

Mr. Wacker:

A lot of those improvements, like the intake structure, which would probably be financed through the CIP program we are looking at currently. Marlette Lake typically does not come in front of IFC for the improvements or construction improvements to the System, but they look for the CIP or keeping it within their budget.

Senator Titus:

Great, thank you for all those answers. Thank you, Mr. Chair for the questions.

Chair Daly:

Any other questions, Committee Members? None from Assemblywoman Taylor? Any of our members on Zoom, Senator or Assemblywoman? Any questions?

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod:

No questions. Thank you for the presentation.

Senator Scheible:

I also have no questions. I do appreciate all this information.

Chair Daly:

Where are you going to have a deficit—when you draw it down and you are not going to be selling as much water—is that built in? Because I know the State helps operate—you guys operate that and you have some revenue, but it does not cover all of your costs, if that is correct. I know there is generally a recommendation here to continue to support the

Marlette Lake Water System. I plan on doing that. How much do you think it is going to impact your budget with the draw down and not selling the water?

Administrator Lewis:

That is part of the discussions we are having right now with Carson City and Storey County.

Chair Daly:

I know when we talked with Storey County and Carson City when they came earlier, along with the first presentation of Marlette Lake—because I know Storey County’s only tie to this was Marlette Lake. Glad to hear it. We want to make sure we have a plan to go forward. Obviously, this work needs to be done. In regard to the offer for a tour, I did speak to your predecessor after his first presentation. We were planning on doing something towards the end of June, which is what the recommendation was. So now we will have to regroup and try that again. I will get a hold of you. Seeing no other questions, we will close Item IV. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION REGARDING LAKE TAHOE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Chair Daly:

We will go to Item V, which is a presentation regarding Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program activities by TRPA representative, Kimberly Caringer.

Kimberly Caringer, Chief Partnerships Officer, TRPA:

My colleague, Kat McIntyre, is also going to be joining me today. Good afternoon, Chair Daly, and Members of the Committee. Go ahead and introduce yourself.

Kat McIntyre, Ph.D., Environmental Improvement Program Department Manager, Forest Health Program Manager, TRPA:

Hi, everyone.

Ms. Caringer:

I am here today to give you a brief overview of the Environmental Improvement Program, or you will hear me refer to it as the EIP through the presentation, because it is going to set the stage for one of the key focus areas you are going to hear about today—forest health and wildfire.

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To set the stage, you know Tahoe is a unique place. Here you have this spectacular natural resource and—for many reasons and a long history I will not go into—it was not designated as a National Park. Instead, we have communities that live here; they enjoy living here within the mountains around the Lake. What makes it really unique is we have a living, working community here—living alongside the resource—all working together to protect it.

You have heard a few different public comments today about our thresholds. Since TRPA's creation, we have had a regional plan and environmental standards we call thresholds that guide the work we do and set goals for the region. We have ten key threshold categories, water quality, air quality—I will not name them all—vegetation preservation is really where all the forest health stuff lies. Our regional plan lays out the road map to achieving these thresholds.

Since Lake Tahoe did not have the traditional regulatory protections that a National Park affords from the beginning, one major element of our regional plan is regulation. In the first 30 years of TRPA's existence, this was the major groundwork that was laid to protect the region. As you know, there was a large building boom here in the '50s and '60s, prior to TRPA's existence, without a regional plan or much critical thought to protecting the Lake, which caused a lot of damage at that time—hence our creation. Through those first 30 years, major regulatory action was taken that is still in place today. Some examples are implementing development caps and development regulations and standards, banning new subdivisions, and implementing limits on how much coverage can exist on a lot, to preserve open space and protect water quality. We worked with a few partner agencies to require all sewage effluent be treated and exported out of the Basin, which is considered a landmark decision for water quality by the scientists here. We put standards and caps on piers and buoys in the Lake, and banned two stroke engines on jet skis that were shown to be big polluters.

One of the biggest actions I want to highlight is there was a strong focus on acquisition of public land around the Basin to protect it from development, maintain the integrity of the ecosystem, and maintain it for public use. The Forest Service, and the states in particular, focused on this acquisition priority in the '70s, '80s, and '90s and acquired thousands of acres of land. Today, 90 percent of the land is protected through public ownership here. Around 78 percent of that being under the U.S. Forest Service, 12 percent or so by the states, which leaves about 10 percent total for private ownership. This model is unique—not a National Park—but we have legacy development here; living communities that enjoy the Lake and our mountains and forests, and a lot of public land that people get to enjoy and want to come and visit.

The focus on all of that regulatory action put in place, about 30 years into it—while all that groundwork was laid for protecting the Basin—we realized there was still a lot of the legacy damage of the past that was affecting our water quality, and our water quality threshold was actually still declining. Here you see a picture from the New York Times in 1997 with Charles Goldman and other scientists that gained national attention. It became very clear as our water quality threshold was still trending down—despite these public land acquisitions and the regulatory controls—that we would need to do more to protect this place. In 1997, we put together a very big to-do list. It became clear that not one jurisdiction could do it—TRPA could not do it alone, it could not be done by one agency. We needed to retrofit every highway in the Basin to treat stormwater runoff. We needed to remove agricultural practices out of the Basin and restore damaged wetlands. We needed to restore our tributaries and do significant forest health treatments to get the upper watershed healthy. This list became the EIP, and it is our proactive capital investment program to accelerate our threshold attainment.

In 1997, at the first Lake Tahoe Summit—I am sure you are all very familiar with it—this signing from President Clinton led to the first iteration of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (LTRA). At this time, all the sectors agreed to not only implement the EIP, but to fund it together. This signing that led to the LTRA would commit federal dollars to the cause; and every sector would match the total need, which at that time was \$900 million. In 2000, we

made a strong investment in science to figure out where to best put management action in those dollars I am talking about. On the left, you see the first watershed assessment put together by scientists in the year 2000—and that was just volume one at about 800 pages—that really drove the priorities of the EIP. This program now cross cuts four different focus areas: watersheds and water quality; forest health; sustainable recreation and transportation; and science, stewardship, and accountability. You are going to hear mostly today about one of those program areas and that is forest health. To date, hundreds of projects have been implemented in each category to further improve the health of the watershed as a whole.

The TRPA's role in that program—it is important to note that TRPA ourselves are not generally implementing these CIPs. We talk a lot about partnerships here, and we have a lot of partners here today that you are going to hear from—and that is because the EIP does not exist without them. I do want to highlight TRPA's role though on the next few slides. There are more than 80 partners implementing the EIP across the Lake Tahoe region; this is awesome because we have a lot of horsepower here to do it. However, it is imperative we all work together; so, we are working towards the same goals, we are not duplicating work, we are not competing for funding, or missing opportunities to leverage each other's work—to get the biggest environmental gains we possibly can. That has been a large part of my job here at TRPA as Chief Partnerships Officer. I am working on keeping the partnerships moving in one direction and coordinating the many hundreds of projects that are happening on the ground. Today we are one of the largest restoration programs in the nation. We sometimes take for granted that we have organized ourselves as a cross boundary bi-state restoration initiative. I highlight that because that was not always the case. Back in those earlier days that I referenced, the jurisdictions were not always working together the way they are now; and many of the other restoration initiatives around the country are striving to do what we are doing here today at this scale.

One big project I want to highlight—we at TRPA work to prioritize and implement projects for regional benefit; projects are the core of the EIP. When talking about water quality and thresholds, one priority of the EIP is to remove that legacy development out of sensitive land. This year EIP partners accomplished a major goal, the acquisition of the Motel Six property in South Lake Tahoe. When this is restored, it will advance multiple thresholds in our stream environment zones, water quality, and again turning it into public ownership for protection against future development. This project connects to decades of projects that the EIP partnership has implemented. In this quarter you see there on the right—this quarter has been a top priority because it was shown by scientists to be one of the major contributors of fine sediment to the Lake, affecting Lake clarity. There are many different projects here that are implemented by different partners and jurisdictions that are all working together with this one big final piece. The California Tahoe Conservancy led this acquisition after years of negotiation with the seller and with funding help from at least six different partners, including \$3.5 million from the TRPA. That funding came from collection of mitigation fees from property owners around the California side of the Basin who have paid into that account for access coverage on their own lots; we mitigate that by removing coverage here. It is a great example of that—it is a good example if people ask where TRPA fees go. I know that project is in California, but it has a major regional benefit to the whole Basin, which demonstrates how the EIP works across jurisdictions.

There are watershed restoration projects on almost every tributary in Nevada as well—Burke Creek, Third Creek, Rosewood Creek; to name a few. There are many forest health projects you are going to hear about from future presenters after me. On the Nevada side, they are particularly cross-coordinated through the Nevada Tahoe Resource Team (NTRT), who are here today, and who work across their different resource areas and work together

to prioritize projects to meet EIP goals. The key is these projects are not done in silos, they are all part of this bigger picture to holistically achieve the goals or thresholds of the Basin.

The TRPA also plays a role in tracking the implementation of those projects and our progress towards threshold attainment. Achieving these thresholds usually spans decades—30 to 40 years is an average—much more than your average EIP employee might be here. We actually are very close to achieving our stream environment zone threshold; I want to say we are like four acres away. Last month, through a lot of work with our partners, the TRPA Governing Board approved a new threshold for the stream environment zone standard. Not because we are done—we know we can do more, and we need to do more. We want to hold ourselves accountable and drive the partnership to do more acreage on stream environment zones.

All of this tracking and data we record is available to the public and anyone interested on LakeTahoeInfo.org. As you see here, we have the EIP project tracker, a Lake clarity tracker, a newly released climate dashboard that tracks progress towards our climate resilience goals, and we have many different performance measures that track progress. You see in the graphs below: the number of watercrafts inspected for aquatic invasive species; acres of forest treated annually; the amount of fine sediment that is getting reduced from flowing into the Lake through the EIP.

I want to touch on public and community engagement. Our public and our visitors are definitely part of the EIP and critical to implementing the EIP. The public participates by doing their own Best Management Practices (BMPs) and defensible space on their own properties, or maybe they are engaged in volunteer efforts around the Basin. You see on the right, there are examples of announcements and webinars our engagement team works on to let people know what is happening in the EIP. One of the biggest priorities we hear from the community when we are working with them is the threat of catastrophic wildfire. You are going to hear today about how the EIP is trying to keep pace with that threat, not to only improve our environment and achieve our forest health threshold, but to protect our communities that live here as well.

On the right, you see pictures from last year's Lake Tahoe Summit. It has continued every year since the inception of the EIP, this year will be the 28th. This public forum is where we continue to get the commitment of the federal government, the states, the locals, the private sectors, and the residents—we are all going to work together to continue to work to protect this special place and make sure that new threats that are emerging are top of mind. At this year's Summit, everyone will likely see and hear the message that we need to extend the LTRA, which is expiring in a few months. Like I shared before, we do not have one single sustainable funding source for the EIP, and we rely on every sector to contribute to support it. When the original LTRA passed back in 2000, it authorized \$300 million from the federal share. We were able to attain that funding through the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA). When the LTRA expired and that SNPLMA obligation ran out, the EIP did go through a bit of a reckoning on lack of public funding and progress was slowed. After a lot of work and advocacy from many partners here, we were able to reauthorize the Act in 2016, and now it is already set to expire in a couple of months. This year TRPA played a leadership role with key partners at the League to Save Lake Tahoe and many local elected officials and key partners from the business community and many others, I cannot name all of them—we led a trip back to Washington to let our congressional delegation know how important it is for this reauthorization because this serves as an anchor for the EIP. It is imperative to our forest health work, and we do not want to see that lapse.

Some of the key messages to our congressional delegation in this Committee is that LTRA leverages that state, local, and private match. Of the \$114 million we have allocated over the last seven years from the federal government, it has leveraged more than \$500 million from the states, locals, and private sector. The EIP also supports jobs around Tahoe. We need restoration crews, foresters, and stormwater technicians to implement this program. That funding goes to our local economy, so you get a return on that investment here in the community and for the Lake.

Lastly, looking forward, we are continuing to make long-term progress on those thresholds, but there are many new threats we did not have 27 years ago when the EIP was started. You have heard about that from our community today and you will hear it today from presenters—extreme weather, mega fires, catastrophic wildfire, warming water, microplastics, growing population outside of the Basin, how people travel here and visitor management, and solving our transportation challenges. Investment in our regional transit system is going to have a huge environmental benefit, if we can try to figure out an EIP funding model like the one I showed today. The TRPA and our partnership, and the EIP is going to have to continue to adapt and evolve and be proactive to address these and maintain our progress and our investment so far in the EIP. We will need to continue to invest in science to drive our work. On the right side there is a link to a story map the Tahoe Science Advisory Council recently put on regarding our understanding today of how we are making progress on Lake Tahoe's clarity. The states both invested in standing up that Tahoe Science Advisory Council; we have built a strong foundation here to build from, to address these new threats. I think you are going to hear a lot today about wildfire and some of those new threats, so I am going to stop here to answer any questions, as this is just an intro to the rest of the day.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. Committee Members, any questions? Assemblywoman Taylor.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

Thank you so much for the presentation and for being here. I have a couple of questions. I see the goal to restore the clarity to 97.4. Is there a timeline for that? Did I miss that?

Ms. Caringer:

No, you did not miss it. Back in 2011, we established between the two states, the Clarity Challenge, and a road map to get to Lake clarity. It is a 65-year timeline, so we are like 15 years in now. We are in it for the long game. They have set interim milestones along that. So far, we have exceeded the targets on reducing fine sediment and pollution to the Lake, but it will not happen overnight. We are looking at long-term trends to restore that Lake clarity.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

If I may follow with a new question, Mr. Chairman. Talk a little bit about the Reauthorization, you said it expires in a couple of months. What needs to occur? What will happen if it does expire? What needs to occur to prevent that?

Ms. Caringer:

We have called attention to the congressional delegation, and we will see this at the Summit this year. We do not want the Act to expire. We have current funding to probably get us

through this next year to focus on the priorities we have on the ground right now. Currently the Act has an authorization of \$415 million. We have only been appropriated about \$114 million over the last seven years. The extension—I guess I should not say reauthorization—it is an extension of the Act. We want more time to be able to gain that full appropriation that was in the original Act.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

Thank you, I appreciate that.

Chair Daly:

Any other questions? Any of our Members on Zoom, questions? Okay, hearing none. Help remind me about what you said. There was an appropriation of \$400 million and only so much of it has been released. So, there is still \$270 something left?

Ms. Caringer:

Yes, there is about \$300 million left. There was an authorization and now every year we go through the annual appropriations to get the targets we need to support the EIP.

Chair Daly:

The money is set aside, it just needs to be released.

Ms. Caringer:

Sort of. The budget process and the federal government is complicated, as I am sure you know. It is authorized, it has to be appropriated annually through the budget.

Chair Daly:

I know you guys recently went back to Washington D.C. and were advocating for that. Is any part of the “7-7-7” strategy for transportation covered with those funds (California, Nevada, or local)?

Dr. McIntyre:

The current LTRA has not authorized funding for transportation. It funds water quality, watersheds, forest health, aquatic invasive species, watershed restoration, and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. That is why it has been such a challenge on transportation; that needs a whole different funding avenue. We look at the EIP model we have done with the EIP here with the federal, state, local, private match; but it is a challenge with LTRA not being authorized to fund transportation at this time.

Chair Daly:

Understood. Last question, when was the last time your current EIP plan was updated? Do you update it annually, so it is not out of date; it is using the best, most recent measurements and information?

Dr. McIntyre:

Yes, the EIP went through a holistic update about five years ago, and we are looking to update it again this year. A threshold evaluation is coming out this year and that will drive

our EIP priorities—how they need to be directed to get the best management action and funding use. We do it often. We can set interim targets; we can set interim priorities. The EIP is not static; it needs to adapt to current threats, so we will continue to evolve and adapt it. We would like to give it another update this year.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. I think that was it. You sure no one else has any questions? [There were no additional questions.] We will close Item V, moving along.

AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATIONS REGARDING LAKE TAHOE BASIN FOREST HEALTH AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Chair Daly:

We will go to Item VI, presentation regarding Lake Tahoe Basin for health and wildfire prevention activities. We have Kathleen McIntyre, Erick Walker, and Ryan Shane presenting.

Dr. McIntyre, previously identified:

Good afternoon and thank you Committee Chair and Committee Members for being here. I am joined today in my presentation by Ryan Shane from Nevada Division of Forestry and Erick Walker, who is the Forest Supervisor with the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. Before I begin our presentation, I am going to pass it over to Bud Hicks who is on my left for opening remarks. Bud is a former presidential appointee on the TRPA Governing Board, was Chair of the Forest Health and Wildfire Committee—again on the TRPA Governing Board and served on the Emergency California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission after the Angora Fire.

Bud Hicks, Member, TRPA Governing Board:

Thank you for allowing me to address you today. I am going to go off the script I prepared. I was fortunate and privileged to serve as a member of the Governing Board of the TRPA for five years, from 2018 to 2023. I was also privileged to serve on the Emergency Fire Commission that was created by the two states after the Angora Fire. I have been around Lake Tahoe since the 1950s and quite frankly, I have heard the complaints about the TRPA. I heard the complaints about “something needed to be done” back in the ‘60s, and then that Bi-State Compact was finally adopted, which is a one-of-a-kind compact. Then I have heard it through the ‘70s, and the ‘80s, and the ‘90s—as a lawyer, as a resident, as a citizen of the State of Nevada. I think I heard it even more when I was Chairman of my homeowner association on the eastern shore. When I had a chance to be appointed to the Fire Commission, I thought, “Maybe I can have a positive influence there and do something good.” And I did. I do not have a technical background in environmental issues—I am a lawyer, what do I know? But I went on the Fire Commission, and it was fascinating to listen to the experts—the people that know things—not only from the two states, but national and international experts. We went through a whole year-long series of hearings, and then we issued a report which had 200 findings and 190 recommendations. Some of those recommendations were really important—well we thought they were all important—but some were critical. The real critical ones were improving communications between all of these governmental agencies and entities here at Lake Tahoe, especially the fire service entities and public safety entities, because that was on everybody's mind at the time. At any rate, we gave a variety of recommendations. When I went on the TRPA Board, I thought, “I am going to check back and see how many of these have been actually enacted, or was it just another one of these blue-ribbon commissions that do reports and go

away?" I was pleasantly surprised to find that many of those recommendations had been addressed in one form or another by the agencies, and the success resounds to this day. For example, the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team—I cannot say it came out of that, but it coalesced as a result of those recommendations and what happened with the Angora Fire in 2007. Today, it is a functioning unit of all of the governmental agencies and all of the fire service agencies that have anything to do with the Lake, and it is a national model. I think we should all be proud of that.

Another thing when I went on the Governing Board of the TRPA, I thought back to all of the complaints I had heard over the years, and I thought again, "Maybe I can be a positive influence here." But again, I was stunningly impressed by the TRPA's Board and its staff. Rather than being sort of a political hellhole, I found very intelligent honest people with really good intentions. There were lip debates about some of these issues within the Board; but on the other hand, they had one goal in mind and that was the protection of the Lake. Protection of the Lake—that is the goal of the Bi-State Compact. I was amazed at the quality of the people who did know much more about these technical issues than myself. I relied a lot on staff, and I was amazed by their technical abilities.

Now the complaints have not gone away, but there is some merit in the comments by many of the public who are still complaining, or come up with statements, and they definitely are worth listening to. But it really is a function of the 2007 Angora Fire; that was 17 years ago. It has taken all those years for all these various recommendations to be addressed and pretty well implemented. As you folks in the Legislature know, there are no instant answers to complex questions, complex problems—these are complex problems. The TRPA has a charge to protect the environment of the Lake. It does not have a charge to build roads or emergency routes, but when the building of roads and emergency routes are considered, they have environmental impacts. So, TRPA is in that tough position in the middle of having to balance these things and it is a tough position to be in. I think there is a recognition by everybody—there has to be coordination, collaboration between all of the interested parties, and that is what I saw when I served on the TRPA Board.

I have gone off the script I prepared to give you, but I wanted to report to you that as a citizen of the State of Nevada, based on my experience, the TRPA and the Compact itself, they are both unique creatures. They are critically important, and I encourage you to—I know you listen to these folks, but please—they are spot on; they are balancing it. They are like the guy on the old Ed Sullivan show that had all the plates on the sticks spinning. I do not know if any of you are old enough to remember that. When that guy was doing his juggling and balancing act, he got a lot of things done, and that is what the TRPA does. I encourage you to listen to what they are saying, to support their programs, to help us in the Legislature to get the funding we need from the State, but also that we need from the federal government and other agencies. Thank you.

Dr. McIntyre:

Thank you, Bud. I will give you a brief overview of what I am going to cover, then we will get into my presentation.

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I am going to do a little bit on background history and set context when we talk about forest health and wildfire and risk in the Tahoe Basin—what are we talking about? Then I am going

to highlight the priorities and projects in three main category areas: fire adapted communities; restoring and maintaining landscapes; and response to wildfire. Then I am going to highlight the work we have been doing in terms of capacity building and technology and innovation. Then I will pass it over to Ryan Shane.

How is forest health defined in the Sierras and specifically in the Tahoe Basin? We know historically—not only in the Sierra Nevadas, but in much of the Western United States—that forests were less dense with more vertical and horizontal heterogeneity across the landscape—so a diverse mosaic when you looked out. In fact, a 2022 study that was conducted by University of California, Davis estimated current forests in the region are six to seven times denser than they were a century ago—which is what we heard on our field tour today—which is no surprise given historical logging practices and the exclusion of fire for over a century. In order to improve forest structure and restore forest health, land managers often treat forests in a variety of ways, including mechanical or hand thinning; mastication, lop and scatter or chipping; replanting of native species if there is a burn; and lastly prescribed burning, whether that is broadcast burning or pile burning. Ultimately, these treatments are all designed to achieve one or multiple goals, including: reduced risk to wildfire; limiting the spread of disease and insects; reducing competition—we heard on our field tour today about the straws in the cup, too many straws; and improving habitat.

As Kim noted in her presentation, the EIP is made up of a couple different focus areas and one of those is forest health, and the working group that operates within the forest health sector is the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT). The TFFT was created in 2008, right after the Angora Fire, to implement the recommendations that came out of the blue-ribbon commission and the multijurisdictional fuel strategy. It is a group of 21 plus agencies, land managers, and nonprofits all striving to improve coordination and increase pace and scale of restoration and ultimately threshold attainment. As I mentioned, the TFFT is a working group of the EIP and is guided by the Multi-Agency Coordinating group (MAC), which is a group of executives and leaders in the Tahoe Basin across fire agencies, land managers, regulatory agencies, and nonprofits. The TFFT uses the forest action plan seen on the left as a guiding document to plan and accomplish work in the Tahoe Basin. This plan outlines a three-pronged approach to achieving forest health and wildfire risk reduction, including: increase capacity; utilizing technology, data, and innovation; and focusing on landscape scale projects. Additionally, the forest action plan also sets a target of treating 22,000 acres of wild and urban interface by 2025, which would be a first entry on all wild and urban interface acreage in the Basin, once completed.

What is TRPA's role in this whole system? As Kim noted, TRPA is the leader and convener of the EIP, and we act in the same role for the TFFT. We are a founding member of the TFFT, and we continue to act in that leadership, convener, and collaborative role with that group as well as the MAC. In terms of forest health, TRPA regularly facilitates, coordinates, and collaborates with the partnership to accomplish more work and fund more projects around the Basin. Additionally, we represented the Basin and Basin partners on a variety of commissions and advisory committees. For example, I was a commission member on the National Wildfire Mitigation and Management Commission that was convened at the federal level. Kasey KC, who is not here today, was also on that Commission with me. We were able to bring lessons learned from Tahoe to the national level, but also cross-pollinate all of the lessons learned, ideas, and solutions that we were hearing from other states and other regions back into Tahoe.

Before I get into all the great work the TFFT is doing, I want to highlight that in order for us to do this work, we have to have a partnership with science, and that partnership underpins everything we do in the Tahoe Basin. The science management nexus is strong here, and we work closely with the Tahoe Science Advisory Council and the research stations to ensure management decisions—especially when it comes to forest health and wildfire risk reduction—are always made with best available science. A great example of this is a study that was recently completed focusing on the Caldor Fire and efficacy of fuels treatments.

Digging into our first area, we are going to talk about all the great projects and work that is being accomplished in terms of fire adapted communities. The Tahoe Basin Fire Adapted Communities program is run and led through the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (RCD) in partnership with the TFFT. For those that do not know, fire adapted communities are a programmatic framework to support and build community wildfire resilience through steps such as home hardening, defensible space, and fuels reduction around communities. To date, there are 75 fire adapted communities and neighborhoods in the Tahoe Basin, with 96 neighborhood leaders. We currently have 37 Firewise USA recognized sites with 4 pending, for a total of soon-to-be 41. In 2022, to give you some context, there were only 12 Firewise USA recognized sites in the Tahoe Basin. We have seen an almost three to four times growth in the last two years of that program. For those that do not know what Firewise USA is, it is a National Fire Protection Association federal program that supports and facilitates community and neighborhood risk reduction related to wildfire.

The graph on the right shows our defensible space inspections. This is something TRPA tracks through our EIP tracker. We had another record year in the Tahoe Basin for inspections with 9,542 inspections, and a total of 72,000 inspections done since 2008. I want to note all the fire protection districts are using a new technology and tool called “Fire Aside;” that is going to help them streamline and communicate about defensible space inspections and actions homeowners can take on their parcel and coordinate with those homeowners. That is being piloted this summer.

All partners participate in and hold a variety of communication, education, and outreach events throughout the Basin, including our newly updated “Get Defensive” defensible space campaign that you see in the middle, as well as holding wildfire preparedness workshops on both shores. The Forest Service is launching a new project map. Maybe some of you are familiar with the prescribed burning map that exists in the Tahoe Basin that is updated regularly and goes out with a press release that says where prescribed burns are going to be happening. We are now going to be doing that with projects as well, so that community members understand what projects are happening in their backyard, who is the lead agency, and why they are happening.

The Lake Tahoe Basin partners are updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs); those were last updated in 2015. The CWPPs are collaborative plans developed to identify and prioritize areas of hazardous fuels, infrastructure protection, and community preparedness. Communities prepare these CWPPs and then are given priority for a variety of funding sources for implementation. The update the partners are doing right now is novel or innovative—we want to keep the protection plan as a living document, so it is going to be hosted online. There will be ArcGIS StoryMaps associated with it. They are using Land Tender, which is a decision support tool that helps them prioritize projects based on different values and values at risk. The plans will also be taking into consideration underserved and vulnerable communities, as well as critical infrastructure, like water infrastructure and evacuation routes in the Tahoe Basin.

Looking at restoring landscapes—the partnership has been able to treat 72,700 acres since the Angora Fire in 2007. Since the EIP inception, we have been able to treat 94,000 acres. One of the key pieces of the forest action plan is a focus on landscape scale projects and you will hear more about those from the Forest Service later in this presentation. Projects like Lake Tahoe West on the west shore, our resilience corridors on both shores, as well as Caldor Fire restoration, all fall into what we consider landscape scale restoration projects.

Now I am going to talk about our response to wildfire. You heard earlier today on the field trip from Shelly Thomsen with South Tahoe Public Utility District; she is one of the leaders of the Tahoe Water for Fire Suppression Partnership, which was formed in 2007 to address firefighting and water infrastructure deficiencies. Water infrastructure plays a critical role in fire suppression, especially when a wildfire gets into a community. The Partnership includes all of the water providers in the Tahoe Basin and is a working group of the EIP. Since 2016, seven projects have been accelerated by federal funding for this group, and more than 100 projects have been implemented by water purveyors specifically related to fire suppression. Examples on the Nevada-side include the Incline Village General Improvement District's (IVGID) Fire Hydrant Replacement Program, the Round Hill Fire Protection Water Infrastructure Tank Program, and the Cave Rock Fire Protection Water Infrastructure Project.

Partners are also working on building shaded fuel breaks and prioritizing evacuation corridors throughout the Basin. The majority of treatments completed in the Tahoe Basin, if you looked at a map of where treatments occur, are actually surrounding communities, neighborhoods, and infrastructure. This will continue to be emphasized as we work on more treatments and include transportation infrastructure in the future. For example, you will hear from Chief Lindgren of the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District; they completed 23 acres on Forest Service land around the Skyland community and will be continuing to build on that shaded fuel break over the next few years. For those who do not know what a shaded fuel break is, it is very similar to what we saw earlier with the resilience corridor. You essentially have an area where you thin out along a corridor, and it gets thicker as you go out; and when fire is moving through that landscape it acts as a way to bring the fire to the ground and give firefighters either an opportunity to catch that fire or to stop that fire completely.

I want to highlight two additional big priorities we are working on in the Tahoe Basin, and one is around capacity building. I am specifically going to highlight the Lake Tahoe Community College Forestry Program that was recently stood up. We also are working on things like developing new focus positions that are going to be coordinating the TFFT as well as Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TREX) or prescribed burning training for the Washoe Tribe to be able to do more cultural burns and prescribed burns in the Tahoe Basin. In terms of the Lake Tahoe Community College Forestry Program, this was a collaborative approach to developing and supporting a forestry program to build the workforce we need in the Tahoe Basin; that included the TRPA, the Tahoe RCD, and multiple partners who helped develop the curriculum. The TRPA has taught several of the classes, including Introduction to Forestry, which our forester teaches currently, and Forest Policy.

Lastly, I wanted to highlight technology and innovation. Before I hand the presentation over to Ryan, I wanted to bring up this innovative pilot we were able to do last month. Last month, partners were able to pilot the Burn Bot project on IVGID land. This was done through a partnership between North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District, the Tahoe Fund, Burn Bot, TRPA, and many other partners. This machine is a remote masticator, and it was able to treat 22 acres of land in 2½ days. To give you a comparison, a typical hand crew treats about 3 to 5 acres a day. The Burn Bot was able to double and almost triple that

acreage output of a hand crew, which has enormous implications for ramping up the pace and scale of our treatments. Additionally, this technology is significantly quieter than what you would find from chainsaws running in a forest and can be safely operated on significantly steep slopes as well as around neighborhoods and communities. We think this technology has a lot of opportunity to do great things in the Tahoe Basin. We are excited to see it get implemented elsewhere. With that, I am going to hand it over to Ryan Shane.

Ryan Shane, Deputy Administrator, Nevada Division of Forestry, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR):

Thank you for having us here to talk about forest health today. Going back to the basic plant biology for forest health, we pay attention to three basic things: sunlight; water; and nutrients. In that vein, we have had an awesome two years of precipitation in the Basin that followed an actually historic two-to-three-year drought. That was one of the worst droughts, at least in some parts of Nevada, in 800 years. An interesting factoid is that plants do not instantly turn on their growth after those prolonged droughts; albeit we have this nice soil moisture thing happening and the moisture in the trees and fuels picking up—it is not instantaneous. What we are seeing and what we are cautiously optimistic about is this delayed, high fire danger in the Tahoe Basin in general. We should not think about that as a break. It is a time we are afforded to engage in sharpening our pencils and increasing our pace and scale of work in the Basin, moving toward those goals you heard Kat talk about in those forest action plans and CWPPs in other places. Unfortunately, when we have those high precipitation years, the lowlands tend to increase in fire danger because of the increased fine fuels in those areas. That potentially creates competition for fire resources in the general region, so that is something to be aware of. They are already predicting a pretty horrific fire season for the lowlands in Nevada.

On this slide, what we see in the green outline is last year's 2023 aerial detection survey. The survey is usually a collaborative effort between State and federal agencies to get a hold of what is acting out there. It is groundries, so it is not guesswork totally from the air. In the table of contents, you see some of the major actors in the area. This detection survey area primarily covered Nevada and then south of the Basin into California. There was work on the California side—it is not shown here. It is important to know these detection surveys do not occur on 100 percent of the acreage every year. They move around and pinpoint areas that have not been visited in a while or areas where outbreaks are occurring. The happy news is most of the agents have backed off slightly in terms of their increased pace of affecting trees negatively and causing mortality. We see the increased mortality curbing slightly in the forest in general. However, all those dead trees that built up over the past few years, and even past decades, are still there presenting the risk, particularly for wildfire in a non-alive format, if you will. One interesting agent that increased was in Red Fir. Red Fir mortality increased in California, but most everything else decreased. I cannot tell you exactly why that is, but there is a subalpine fir decline that is happening in the region. When you hear about those kinds of symptoms, it is usually a culmination of lack of water, lack of forest health, and then disease agents that move in and gang up on the trees. That is generally what we see in these forests is you will have pockets of individual agents, as you can see on this map. Our best defense is good forest health. We are never going to rid the forest of all these agents and even wildfire, but we can do things to better our chances by increasing forest health.

We have heard a lot about Tahoe EIP, AD partners working collaboratively at every level of government, private sector, public sector—integrating. We do things better together—that is the statement that rings true every time. Sometimes it is harder to get started up and moving, but then you have a bigger team with more resources to share and to do things

more efficiently. We have big problems, and we need big solutions. Tahoe EIP, the NTRT, and TFFT all provide those venues to collaborate and make this a reality to meet our goals. Within the NTRT, the Division of Forestry, the Nevada Division of State Lands, and the Department of Wildlife, are all represented—integrating their expertise to handle those properties on which the State of Nevada has jurisdictional responsibility for management. The great news about these two high precipitation years is we had the opportunity to implement prescribed fire on much more acreage than we had before. Nevada has actually chewed through our entire backlog of burn piles, which has been a constant concern for all agencies and the public, and we take that seriously. I am proud to tell you about that accomplishment today, and thanks to the NTRT for making that happen. I would be remiss in not mentioning our partners—we share resources, and we plan together. With that kind of backlog, even though it is on State lands and in our jurisdiction, we do employ other agencies to help us in the challenge of handling forest health in an appropriate, responsible manner all the way down to the local level with our local fire protection districts.

On the picture here on the top, you see a whole conglomeration of those partners. In the blue hats particularly, that is about to be our first Type 2 fire and fuels hand crew. They are a full-time crew we have hired based out of Washoe Valley, Nevada; they will be available statewide and region-wide for fire suppression and fuels work. It is the first of three we are standing up in our transition with conservation crews in Nevada.

This slide is on Nevada shared stewardship. In general, the Tahoe Basin is a shared stewardship priority landscape in Nevada. In 2019, we signed the Nevada Shared Stewardship Agreement, which charged us with creating priority landscapes where we could focus our limited resources in having the biggest impact on wildfire and other agents that were negatively impacting high-value ecosystems and communities. There are quite a few colors on this map, I will explain them. On the map we have orange polygons that are the 13 priority landscapes. There are 2 black polygons on the Sierra and Elko fronts; those are wildfire crisis strategy landscapes the U.S. Forest Service created on top of the same areas. Since this was a data driven approach, the priority landscape areas ended up landing on top of each other numerous times, which is a great thing. It is doing exactly what we are talking about here with EIP, TFFT, and NTRT—all the acronyms of main collaborative interagency work. The blue areas are Bureau of Land Management (BLM) restoration landscapes on that map.

Regarding the areas listed to the left of the map, the orange landscapes are currently represented by planning groups we have stood up similar to the TFFT. They are administered from an interagency standpoint and collectively prioritize within those landscapes where treatments are going to go, regardless of property boundaries or anything else. They are trying to focus on those important areas. The Tahoe Basin is colored in green because of all the wonderful things we have heard here today and the fact that the Tahoe Basin has led the way for this kind of approach. The last five black bullet points on this list are currently unstaffed from a collaborative planning standpoint. There is work going on in those landscapes, but it is not as integrated and scaled up as we need in those areas, due in part to limitations on capacity and resources. Based on what you are hearing from us and everybody else, the Tahoe Basin is amazingly ahead of the times for what we need to do. The good thing about taking this to the rest of Nevada, particularly in the Sierra front for the Tahoe Basin, is fire runs uphill. Albeit our winds generally go from west to east, it is not unheard of for up-canyon winds from the valley bottoms below to move the other way and bring fire from outside the Basin into the Basin.

I am proud to announce in the time this initiative has been going, we have exceeded our goals by two or three times in terms of acres treated per year. We are on the order of about

200,000 acres per year right now. We want to continue scaling up, and we have been scaling up about 190 percent year over year since it started. That is just one part of it. The big part is all the relationships and partnerships that are being built amongst all entities across the State, including tribes and public-private partnerships, et cetera. The exciting news about those black wildfire crisis landscapes is we saw about \$117 million of federal investment come to those two particular landscapes to do the work we need to do. Although a lot of that was aimed at federal land, some was afforded as nonfederal jurisdictions. We have opportunities to leverage those funds and maybe invest in partnering funds to do more work in those environments as well.

All these partners remain engaged to scale up treatments before wildfires occur to protect communities and the forests. I did not do an acreage check on wildfires that have occurred within the Basin, but most of them have been on the California side. That is unfortunate—it is unfortunate wherever and whenever it happens. When the firefight is on, we are all going to aggressively attack it, initially and extended, to make sure it is put out as fast as possible. Fires, once they are burned, obviously need attention for restoration and rehabilitation. We will again partner in that phase of how that wildfire affects the landscape. Luckily in Nevada, we do not have a lot of wildfires to rehabilitate, but we stand ready to engage in that activity whenever it presents itself.

In closing, I think all of us here are committed to working on all lands, utilizing all available tools, and prioritizing limited resources and funding to the highest needs. Thank you, and I will pass it to Erick Walker.

***Erick Walker, Forest Supervisor, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit,
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service:***

Chair Daly, Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, and thank you for inviting us also for the field trip. I apologize in advance if I repeat myself and say things I shared with you on our field trip. For the benefit of the Members who were not there and those who are remote, I want to make sure they have the benefit of this information. One of the things I think you will see in these conversations is there is a strong thread: partnerships; wildfire knows no boundaries; it takes multi-parties/multi-jurisdictions to keep our community safe; protect our responders and our community's lives; and values at risk. At risk of being redundant, you will hear that through my presentation today.

As the Forest Supervisor in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, I have the responsibility and privilege to serve the public in managing over 155,000 acres of National Forest System lands amounting to about 78 percent of the land base in the Lake Tahoe Basin. We were formed in 1973 as a management unit to bring the management of three national forests—the Tahoe, El Dorado, and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests under one management unit. We were stood up as a direct result of recognizing that three national forests operating differently were not as effective in protecting the resources and serving the community of Lake Tahoe. We have a land and resource management plan, like all national forests, and a staff such as me and many others—in the summer months upwards of 200 people—to serve the community and steward the resources.

You saw a slide earlier that had the same graph in terms of the Lake Tahoe Basin Forest Action Plan; Dr. McIntyre explained it very well, so I do not want to belabor that. One of the things we do, as a management unit and agency, is we work very closely with all of our partners to set those priorities as described through the TFFT. Over multiple years, we have been focusing and continue to focus on the wildland urban interface. That is where our livelihoods are largely made, where both residents and nonresidents alike habituate, and

also where the infrastructure that supports our communities exists. We work in this partnership and prioritize the work we do. You will likely hear later how that work will occur within these evacuation routes, so in the event—it is not an if, it is when—that fire shows up, we can safely mobilize—not only our community, but our firefighters—to assist in the control of that fire. Then we start to move out into that general forest area. What I mean by the general forest area, it is not the wildland urban interface area—there are threat zones and defense zones—but usually it is that mile, mile and a half area within development that is the wildland urban interface. As you can see on this map, as you look further outside the development, that is the general forest area. That is important to manage properly also.

As many of you know—and as we discussed at the field trip earlier today—our history here in the Basin. When we came to provide resources to the Comstock logging and development that occurred in the mid and late 1800s, we removed about two-thirds of the standing timber in the Basin. We estimated at that time there might have been roughly two to three million trees in the Basin—based on historic photos, old data, ledgers, and notes taken by early settlers. We try to look at where we were and where we are today. Today, by using satellite technology and other types of remote sensing, we find that we are in excess of 20 million trees. What do 20 million trees need? As Ryan mentioned earlier, they need water, sunlight, and nutrients. Regarding forest health, all those trees are competing against one another. When they are competing and do not have adequate water, soil, nutrients, and sunshine, then those trees become diseased, and they become more vulnerable. In the slide Ryan shared earlier showing where we have insect outbreaks—these are all native insects. These are here—they are not foreign pathogens, but they are able to actually outperform themselves and be a detriment to our landscape, because there are so many weakened trees. The trees themselves do not have the ability they would normally have in a healthy forest to resist the attacks by those insects.

We are moving out in that general forest area, because we recognize a fire that has a lot of momentum in it—even with really good fuels work—it sometimes can overwhelm that area. Fortunately, with the Caldor Fire, we were able to have the right treatments in place, the right home hardening stuff, and the water available to mount a safe and effective attack. When we do not have those things in place, it is not safe to put our firefighters in there. They have a very low probability of success of putting the fire out and they are at an increased risk. If you go to any fire camp where there is an extended attack in place—and even before the extended attack—everything is about first responder life and also that of the public, we serve.

We need to have these places where we can effectively have the forest healthy; so, when that fire shows up, we have the highest probability of successfully suppressing that fire. As we look at past treatment areas, it is about maintenance. There is no “one and done” here in this effort. It is like cleaning your house. You get it all nice and spiffy, the guests show up and everybody has a good time, and a few weeks later you are back cleaning the house again. We have got to keep up on it. It is going to take multiple entries and a steady type of maintenance around those actions. We have to treat the things that are out of balance, as well as take care of those things we have treated; and to have all of our resources, including our partners, to do that.

The numbers I share here are strictly on National Forest System lands—recognizing there is a lot of great work being done on State Park lands and other jurisdictions. We have planned approximately 6,000 acres of treatment in 2024. Roughly 1,100 of those acres will be completed this year through ongoing contracts and agreements. Generally, our service contracts are two to three years long, between availability of workforce and the season, and

depending on what kind of access you have to the landscape. Therefore, by the end of next year, we hope to be able to have an additional 3,800 acres treated.

I wish I could say the 772 acres of pile burning reduced our backlog—like Ryan was able to share. We have a few more acres and a few more piles out there, but we have made significant progress because of the less impactful wildfire seasons we have had the previous two years and with the right kind of weather—we have been able to really escalate the number of acres we have been able to burn. To date, since the beginning of October 2023, we have been able to treat 772 acres. That has been achieved not only through Forest Service crews doing the work, but through the crews of our partners. We work with the Great Basin Institute; they provide a ten-person crew through funds we provide to do the work. All of our—I should not say all of our fire protection districts yet—are under agreements where they are doing burning, but we have had great success with burning with the Tahoe Douglas Fire District, as well as the North Lake Tahoe Fire District. We would not have that many numbers if we did not have partners and the funding, we get through things such as the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act and the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

As you can see that split, since we are focused on Nevada today, where about 1,200 acres of our work is being done in Nevada in about 4,800 acres. If you think about the distribution of our land base, the federal land base, that is about an even split between the two states. Not trying to show favoritism to California or that Nevada is less important—we are trying to treat the highest priority areas first, as well as make sure we are treating those high priority areas across the Lake.

Specific projects we are working on, you can see that list there. We are doing the work and as we saw earlier today with the Nevada Energy Resilience Corridor work, we are doing similar work with Liberty Energy on the same side. That is ensuring we get work done that protects the infrastructure of the energy corridors, as well as protecting the landscape—should they have an ignition begin from those energy corridors. We get a double bonus—we keep our lights on, we keep our air conditioners and ventilation systems working when needed, but we also ensure when there are failures that we have less likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire coming. We are continuing to do our prescribed fires. We will burn—whether they are piles or understory burns—we will continue to do them as long as we have a prescription—we have a burn plan. We have to burn under the right conditions, in the right place, with the right resources. When weather, people, and the land line up, we get a lot of work done. We are going to continue to seek those opportunities. Despite the heat, we are hoping we will be able to do burning on the California side later this weekend and early next week—where we have already made entries into—to get the bulk of the fuel and forest material out of the forest. Now we can start to put that understory burn, because we have to—these are fire dependent ecosystems. If they do not have fire at some point in time, they start to get ill; they get out of balance with their natural cycle. Fire has occurred through natural ignitions and through historic ignitions by Indigenous communities such as the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. We are trying to get that understory burn—so we do not have to worry as much about these areas where we put understory burn. As we heard earlier—that burn, 5 to 20 years, but we still have to keep that in mind. Then, when we get 20 years down the road, we will be putting fire back in there and keeping that landscape healthy.

Looking forward in the planning we are doing—so we get the right work done in the right place—we have been working with our partners and other agencies on the Lake Tahoe West Restoration Project. I realize that is in California, but as we know fire generally moves from west to east. Everything we can do—especially learning about the Caldor Fire, that fire can

cross the Sierra Crest. We saw that with the Dixie Fire in the same year. The Mosquito Fire that occurred in 2022, that got all of us a little nervous again. Are we going to be looking at Caldor? But through strong work by fire suppression resources that were on the Mosquito Fire, we did not get visited by that fire from the West. If it had come, it would have come into the area we are currently planning on, where there is higher tree mortality along the west shore of the lake—less fuel work that has been done historically. We are planning in the right place. It is a 60,000-acre planning area that stretches from Emerald Bay all the way around towards the Dollar Point area—you can see the acres and proposed activities there. We will hopefully have this planning done by the end of this calendar year and begin implementing in 2025.

Caldor Fire restoration planning—one of the things I failed to mention is we do have restoration work already occurring in the Caldor Fire footprint. We are removing all hazard trees that are within 200 feet of trails, roads, infrastructure, homes, et cetera—in order to reduce that hazard, keep those places open and safe for visitation, as well as removing that fuel from the landscape. As those trees become weakened and hit the ground, they become that next fuel concern. While they are standing vertical right now, they are not as much of a fuel concern; but we know they will find their way to the ground, so we are going to be removing those.

Secondarily, we are also beginning the planning for a broader level of restoration in the Caldor footprint. We are beginning that later this year. We are working with a third-party contractor to expand our capacity with the goal of having a decision and beginning implementation in 2025. We are looking at continuing that fuel reduction in the wildland urban interface, reforestation, and other ecosystem service improvements that we need to do where we can. There will be a large portion of that landscape that does not get treated because of access, and because Mother Nature has a lot of capacity to restore the landscape. We want to work with Mother Nature and our partners, to help jumpstart that and make the investments that will move towards a healthy forested landscape in the future.

The partnerships—here you can see that broad list of partnerships. Fire knows no boundaries, so we have to have all these partners both in the work we do to restore landscapes, but also—as I will talk about in a moment—how we respond and show up when the fire bell does ring. Our partners allow us to expand capacity. I would do probably one-third of the work if I did not have this group of partners working with me, because that is the staff and the fiscal resources I have. Whereas having all these partners, I can expand; I can use matching monies, they can bring in monies, and we all work to force multiply each other's efforts on that landscape. I will not go through that list, but the partnership I want to mention is with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California; we will be doing work burning—probably next year after we do the first entry on Meeks Meadow on the West Shore, . Máyala Wáta Restoration Project. That is a joint project where they are taking the lead, and we are working with them to get the forest health work done and through our Meeks Bay restoration project—which we have not completed that decision—but we will have that here shortly. Then we can start to do the watershed restoration in the creek with the goal of getting the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout restored into that watershed for generations to come. They are expanding their work in both the fuels work and the ecosystem restoration work. We are working closely with them to get their folks properly trained to be able to do the work under our guidance, and also learn from them in the work and how they have used fire historically on this landscape.

Fire preparedness—there is a lot to read on this slide; please read it. I am not going to read it to you, but what I want to emphasize is that collaboration—the partnership—of all those

entities that are in that first bullet point. All of those folks come together to make sure we are ready when that fire bell does ring. How does Heavenly, Kirkwood, Palisades, or those areas factor in? In the Caldor Fire, Heavenly was where we had one of our fire camps. That was where our incident command areas were. As we heard from Shelly Thomsen with South Tahoe Public Utility District, the water purveyors, it is important we are connected with them even when the fire bell is not ringing; because all of these folks need to come together to be ready for when it does. We have been working with the fire chiefs around the Basin, as well as law enforcement, on that Basin-wide evacuation plan. I believe that will be discussed later.

The other thing is in that third bullet statement regarding the “closest resource concept.” When a fire bell rings—yesterday, we had a small eight-acre fire on the North Shore in the King's Beach area. Even though that was what we refer to as our direct protection area for the U.S. Forest Service, the first entity on scene was North Lake Tahoe Fire. They took command of the fire; they began the suppression activities. The Forest Service rolled in, then they transferred command to us—their resources, our resources, and all the necessary resources we needed. In a sense, it is not about, “It is on Forest Service only,” they show up; or it is only on the Nevada Division of Lands, State Parks—it is whoever is closest gets dispatched. The “Sub-Geo” agreement is one of the many tools we use to move resources across jurisdictional boundaries, as well as across state boundaries. That is a way to get people paid for the work they do. We have these agreements in place that, when you are showing up, you are going to cover for a few hours; but if you have got to be here for an extended amount of time, we have a mechanism by which to pay you and have you do that.

Specific to the Lake Tahoe Basin, our Fires and Fuels Program, you can see our complement. We have four engine modules. We have a Hotshot Crew, which is a Type 1 Interagency [Hotshots] Crew. We have three prevention patrols. We have fuel leadership with three permanent positions. We are growing our fuels program. Currently we have our ten person GBI fuels prescribed fire crew. We are sitting quite well with our staffing; we should have full five-day coverage for all four engines. Our Tallac Hotshots are all ready, we have gone through our preparedness reviews, and all of our resources are available to fight fire.

One of the things I would also like to say regarding preparedness is fire suppression is our number one job. When the fire bell rings—that is how we are programmed, that is how we are dispatched—we are going there to put the fire out. You heard earlier from one of the members of the public, that Chief Moore of the Forest Service, who provides an annual letter of intent, may have led the public to believe that is not where we are at. We are in the business of suppressing fires, but we are also in the business of looking for opportunities where we can have fire—natural ignitions, those that Mother Nature starts—not human ignitions that are accidental or deliberate, or purposeful ignitions on behalf of agencies such as prescribed fire. We are about putting fires out. But we are also looking—and we use a risk-based informed decision around that, because our first priority is firefighter and public safety. We need to make sure everything we do does not put unnecessary risk to them. We understand that firefighting is a risky business. There is a good way to go about it, and there is a not as good way or not as safe way to do it. I do not want folks here in this room or anywhere in the Tahoe Basin to think we are here to—there is no “let it burn” policy in the U.S. Forest Service. I want to make sure that is clear, but we are also looking—where we have been successful, the right place, the right location—to allow fires for other than full suppression. They still have management plans, we still have management teams, and they are staffed. There is not a fire that does not have somebody focusing on it. I realize there have been accounts of past fires—I am not here to address that today. I am saying that is where we are coming from and that is the direction I have

provided to my Fire Chief and our fire organization as we went through our preparedness reviews, and that is what has been communicated from our Fire Chief on the Forest Service with all of our fire chiefs here in the Tahoe Basin, both with the State and our local fire protection districts.

I want to touch briefly on these three elements. A prevention program is how we make sure our public are fully informed of what they need to do to be safe in the woods. We have patrols out throughout all of the fire season. We work with not just the schools, but people out in the woods to engage with them to make sure they know what they need to be doing. We find that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It starts with education. Then we go to engineering and that is the forest health work. Then the enforcement is, "If you want to have a fire in the wrong place at the wrong time, here is your citation; and if you actually caused a wildfire, here is the bill." We want to make sure the public is well-informed, well-educated, and understands what is needed from them to keep themselves and our forests healthy.

We use fire restrictions that limit how the public may or may not act in the Tahoe Basin. We work closely with all of our local fire districts in the State to ensure when conditions necessitate that we limit the use of fire by not only ourselves but by the general public. Oftentimes we will still allow fires to occur in our developed recreation sites. There are multiple reasons for that. They have developed fire rings they can burn in, plus we have people who are constantly working at those developed recreation sites to ensure they are educating, informing, and making sure people have put their fires out. To my knowledge—and I have asked for data—nobody can point out to me that we have ever had a wildfire begin in a developed recreation site. When you think fire conditions are a big concern, the same concern does not exist within our developed recreation sites. Sometimes there is tension that exists around that, "We cannot have fires outside of these developed recreation sites, why do you allow them in it?" Then there are times when the fire risk is too high, therefore we put in fire restrictions even in those locations.

Lastly, the public information team that is a subset of the TFFT, they are our messengers. They are the ones who are helping us educate, inform, and make sure our communities know where we are working and what they can do to be helpful. They are also monitoring what we are hearing from the public; so, we can be responsive and make sure we are transparent, and folks understand what we do. With that, I appreciate all your time and thank you for having me here today.

Chair Daly:

Thank you, that was a lot of information from the three of you. I am sure we will have questions. Senator Titus, go ahead.

Senator Titus:

Thank you for that presentation and the combined effort from all of you—because, believe me, in my neighborhood there are people who do believe you sit and watch way too long before you intervene on fire; so, thank you for that clarification. I have a couple of questions. First, are you using—you mentioned both the federal Forest Service and the Nevada Department—you mentioned restoration, restorative, and rehabilitation. I read recent articles and recently toured the Walker Basin Conservancy where they have their nursery; and I know I have gotten a lot of my trees on my properties from the Washoe Nursery there. Do you have enough seed? Do you have enough product to do the restoration you need to do? Is that a struggle, or how are you accessing that?

Mr. Shane:

It is a struggle to get adequate plant materials. There have been all kinds of studies regionally, nationally, et cetera; and in general, whether you are talking about live plant stock or seed, the right stuff is not available. Ecological sites are very particular about which species can be used to effectively restore those sites. We do our best at the State with our State nurseries. Oftentimes, if we have a big event, we have no choice but to go with things that are produced from outside the region. The best practices these days is looking for local seed sources. The genetics of these plants is keyed into the local soil types, weather patterns, and precipitation amounts, et cetera—timing of that precipitation. If you want to be really effective, the right way to do it is to grow the seed locally. I know the Nevada Native Seed Strategy is working on that; it is a huge collaborative partnership. They received federal funding to enhance their production of seeds locally, but we have a long way to go in that department. Certainly, I think Nevada is one of about three State nurseries still in business, and a lot of commercial nurseries have gone out of business as well. I cannot tell you why on the commercial side, but on the State side we are an enterprising budget. We have to make all our own money by selling the products. That does not necessarily allow us to readily expand and contract our services as fast as needed in these priority landscapes.

Senator Titus:

I have toured and bought many trees from the State nursery in Washoe Valley. As a matter of fact, last Arbor Day I bought a tree for every single elementary student at the Smith Valley High School. You folks were very good about opening that up for me, so I could provide that in April when you were not open to other folks. What I was surprised at and wondering if you are having any joint effort—I was truly shocked when I walked into the nursery at the Walker Basin Conservancy Nursery there. I do not know if you have been down there, but they produce these seeds. They are growing from seed stock, and they have several large buildings full of these infant plants starting, and they have these seeds. I did not know if there was any cooperative effort with that from the State level.

Mr. Shane:

It is interesting because when they wanted to get started, they called us for advice, and we helped them get started. They have access to an immense bank account that allowed them to construct the facilities. Then they collected the technical and scientific information to be able to scale their systems up to do what they need to do. A lot of times the species they are collecting and they have crews, they have capacity and manpower to go out and collect seed, grow these plants out, and then plant them in the designated areas in which that nonprofit entity is charged with restoring. The pump was primed in that scenario with defined goals and investments and then capacity built. I think that is what we struggle with in the general restoration stock loop is that we do not have the upfront investments to create the production facilities and entice growers to switch to these native species and collect seed from those local cultivars—put them to work in their facilities or fields and then harvest them into the products we can use to restore these landscapes once they are impacted.

Senator Titus:

That is unfortunate because I think that is all public funds they are using there too; those are not private funds. Those are public taxpayer funds that are being used and—in my opinion—there should be more cooperative effort between them.

A final comment, you mentioned that trees do not just sit there waiting until they get moisture. I would argue that my puncture vines wait for years—they can be dead for decades and suddenly you give them moisture and those puncture vines are so happy, overnight.

Chair Daly:

Any other questions? Assemblywoman Taylor.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

This question is for Dr. McIntyre. I want to go back to the community college program and several of the presentations we have had today. People have talked about having openings, wanting to grow, and bringing people into the field. I want to know if you have any information on how it is going; I know it is relatively new from how you report it. Is it attracting more people—more young people, or old people for that matter, to the field so we can grow more professionals in this area?

Dr. McIntyre:

Last year was the first year of that program. We are seeing it increase and more interest in it, but it is still in its nascent stages. We did have full classes in classrooms and many of the students I worked with were California Conservation Corps (CCC) crew members. Daily they were with the CCC, then they would come to class. When they were finished with class, they were looking for jobs and they were placed on the seasonal crews with the Tahoe RCD. We are seeing a pipeline start to form and cultivating that interest in forestry. University of Nevada, Reno has a forestry program. We had them come up and talk. We are having the universities come and talk to these students about what the next steps are after this two year program. If you want to continue in forestry, where would you want to go? I do think there is a lot of promise. The Tahoe Fund was kind enough to provide scholarships for the first year for those students, so all of those students got to go tuition-free in the forestry program.

Assemblywoman Taylor:

That is great to hear, thank you.

Chair Daly:

To our Members on Zoom, any questions? [There were no additional questions.]

I have a couple and hopefully it will make sense. Sounds to me, on this level, for the fire prevention, preparedness, and going to fight the fires—you guys have much greater collaboration and partnership than other areas in the valley. When there is a fire, nobody is saying, "You have to fill out paperwork to use my hose." They say, "Use my hose, we will take care of the paperwork later." I hope other areas—like transportation, housing, et cetera—can have that type of coordination and partnership. Seems to me that is a little bit better on the cases, and the jurisdiction stuff is not quite as much of a barrier—which is good to hear. For Dr. McIntyre, regarding the Community Wildfire Protection Plans, I see it has not been updated since 2015. Where are you at on that? You want to do that. Obviously, technology, innovations, and plans keep going; you guys are not the only ones coming up with innovative ways. I am sure you are looking to see what other areas are doing and adopting best practices. Nine years ago, seems like a long time. Where are you going with that?

Dr. McIntyre:

The CWPP update—I think the draft should be out in December this year. The idea is that it is an iterative, living document. Before, it—I think quite literally—was hundreds of pages in a binder that sat somewhere. Now this is a document the public can access; that land managers and fire protection districts can access, and actively go through to see what projects are in my area that need to be prioritized to move forward. Land Tender—I do not know how many of you are familiar with Land Tender—but Land Tender is an interesting new technology software that is connecting remote sensing and light detection and ranging (LiDAR) into a Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping format. You can go in and change your values. You can say, “I want to prioritize wildfire risk reduction, community benefit, and habitat improvement.” You can assign values to those, and based on that it will give you projects. It will tell you, “This project is going to meet all three [values], this project is going to meet one.” It is this new, cool, innovative way for the districts and land managers to understand how we take what appears to be competing values and interests—how do we take all of those and put them into a project and create something that perfectly matches what everyone wants to see.

Chair Daly:

You are updating your plan, but it is also evolving as you move forward, as we get more information and new technology. I wanted people to know who say, “This is out of date, which is out of date, you are not looking at this.” I want to try to understand, because you guys went first, and you talked about the fire and fuel production part of that. I want to be clear, is that a TRPA initiative, is it under them, or is it under Division of Forestry? What is California’s counterpart for the Division of Forestry? It is not the U.S. Forest Service, there is a California counter counterpart, correct?

Mr. Walker:

Yes sir, CAL FIRE is the State agency we work with. We have two units: (1) the Amador-El Dorado, and (2) the Placer-North Yuba-Nevada unit. We work with those on the State side.

Chair Daly:

They have similar responsibilities as Nevada Division of Forestry and then they coordinate with everybody. On the fuels and fire thing—is it Division of Forestry? Is it U.S. Forestry? Who is it? Who funds them?

Dr. McIntyre:

I am going to ask a clarifying question. I want to make sure the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team—is that what we are talking about? The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team is Basin-wide. It is all of the fire protection districts, NDF, CAL FIRE, State Parks, NDSL, the Forest Service, Lahonton, TRPA, the League to Save Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Fund—we have started bringing in National Forest Foundation, Great Basin Institute. It is a collection of all of the partners that are operating in this space, and it is multijurisdictional. It covers all lands, cross boundary. It is funded mostly through staff time from each agency.

Chair Daly:

I get that. You have people on the ground that are doing that and then you have different partners that are doing some of the funding. I am trying to get to a question, maybe it will

be clear in the end. In the end, who has the responsibility—first responsibility—for fire protection, prevention, and extinguishing the fires? It is not the TRPA.

Dr. McIntyre:

No. Correct, no.

Chair Daly:

Is it U.S.—or all of the above—all of the other agencies working in collaboration that we had the whole presentation on?

Mr. Walker:

We have jurisdictional boundaries, but as I was describing earlier in my presentation, we use the closest resource to respond to those fires. Each agency shows up with their pot of money, their resources, et cetera. Then through these agreements we have worked out the paperwork, the billing element, so we can get to the fire and put it out. The closest resource shows up, even though it may not be their jurisdiction of land. Then the entity that has the jurisdiction over that land base will assume command at an appropriate time, and use all the resources that are needed, provided by all the partners, to suppress that fire.

Chair Daly:

Understood. That is what I was trying to get to—because we hear all the time that “TRPA is not doing this, and TRPA is delinquent on this”—and it is not their responsibility. They are partners, they have a role, but the primary firefighting, fire protection, and evacuation—we are going to have on our next presentation—is not TRPA.

Mr. Walker:

Correct.

Chair Daly:

I wanted to be clear.

Mr. Walker:

But if they want to get red carded and get signed up, some days we need everybody we can get.

Chair Daly:

You will take their hands on a shovel, and you will take their money. That was my last question. I wanted to make that point or have that point be clarified; TRPA is playing the role, but it is not their responsibility for all of this fire stuff. Any other questions? Nobody. Thank you for your presentation.

AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATIONS REGARDING LAKE TAHOE BASIN EVACUATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Chair Daly:

We will move to Item VII, presentation regarding local Lake Tahoe Basin evacuation planning activities. We have TRPA representative Julie Regan, representatives of the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association, Chief Scott Lindgren, and Chief Ryan Sommers, Sheriff Crowley from the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, and maybe Kelly Echevarria as well.

Julie Regan, Executive Director, TRPA:

Thank you, Chair Daly, and Members of the Committee, the staff, the public, and my colleagues. I appreciate you being back at TRPA's offices. I have a few introductory remarks before I turn it over to my esteemed colleagues. I am so proud to be here—as you rightly pointed out, Chair Daly—with the folks who are in charge of the topic of the day. We at TRPA consider everyone to my right and the greater partnership within the TFFT to be our Tahoe heroes. These are the people that are putting their lives at risk to save the Lake—to protect our natural resources, our communities, and our homes. This whole topic hits very close to home—as I have testified before you and in other legislative committees—the folks during the Caldor Fire saved my home; our local Tahoe heroes and our fire first responders, law enforcement—not one permanent resident lost their home in Caldor. Nor did we lose any lives through the evacuation. That is putting a fine point on—you have heard a lot of data; you have seen a lot of maps; and heard a lot of statistics. Thank you for your patience. We know it was a lot to cover this afternoon, but at the end of the day, this is very personal to everyone who lives here, who loves this Lake in our two states. I am still finding, poignantly, embers in my backyard from Caldor, and it is a great reminder that this really matters. With that, I do appreciate the questions of the Committee and the work of this Committee, because it is an educational opportunity, not just for Members of the Legislature, but for the public and for all of us to understand who does what in this Basin. It is a very large Basin and TRPA does not have law enforcement authority—the folks in uniform do. There was a question about tourism and revenue—we are not funded through transient occupancy taxes or sales tax. Our budget is not like the local government. This is a great opportunity to tease these things out and to shed some light on what is an essential part of the work we do under the Bi-State Compact. The Bi-State Compact does require that we harmonize those ten categories you saw—water quality, air quality, vegetation, recreation—and we must harmonize under the law. However, the work of that partnership—the EIP—over the last 12 or 14 years has amassed over \$1,000,000,000 of investment in water quality and forest health. The top two areas of funding that have flowed into the partnership of those 80 implementers have been in the areas of water quality, fire, and forest health. There is a way to prioritize through budget investments, not necessarily from a legal framework of what is the top priority of the agency. Forest health is increasingly getting the attention of all of our funders, from the federal to the local level and even the private sector, as you heard. We are going to be talking about building on the presentations you have heard. We know those of us that have chosen to live in the Basin, to have property in the Basin, to visit the Basin—it is not a matter of if another wildfire is going to happen, it is when is another wildfire going to happen—because we live in the forest, and we have to prepare. That is the topic of the day—the preparation. The Caldor Fire of 2021 was monumental. I was evacuated early because my home is in Christmas Valley where the fire entered the Basin; but the entire South Shore community evacuated. There are lessons learned that you would hear from our professionals to my right. We are learning, growing, and doubling down on the importance of this in the community; because we know it is top

of mind for everyone that loves this, Lake. We already covered a little bit of this, Chair Daly, with your question—what is TRPA’s role? We do have environmental standards. We have land use decisions that our Governing Board makes. How we authorize development, where we authorize development, which is related. But at the end of the day, it is law enforcement, first responders, fire, and other emergency service personnel that have the responsibility to manage evacuations in an incident. We support that in our role in fighting for funding, convening, and organizing conversations based on preparedness and forest health, because it all links together. One thing I did mention to this Committee that is a bright spot, is in our role as convener and a champion for the Basin partnership. Most recently, we achieved a \$1.7 million award from the federal government from the Federal Highway Administration to assist in learning and improving our overall preparedness and resiliency to emergencies like wildfire—and building on what we learned in terms of communication. When we evacuate one part of the Lake, it affects the other, because traffic—we have one roadway around the Lake Tahoe Basin, largely. We are going to be building on that using new federal resources to support that work. With that, I will now turn this over to Chief Scott Lindgren, and I appreciate the opportunity to kick this panel off.

Scott Lindgren, Fire Chief, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District:

Good afternoon, it has been a long day for you already. I cannot believe you do not stand up and take a break; I cannot sit for this long. You are in my district right now—here in Douglas County, Nevada. I also represent as the Chair of the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association, which is both states, and the Northern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association. All the talk you heard about the TFFT—I am also currently the Chair of the MAC Committee that oversees that Committee. There has been a lot of great information today, and it all ties together with what we are going to talk about. I really appreciate the questions I have heard today—very engaging and a part of it. I also want to say I appreciate a lot of the public comments that came in the beginning on support for the firefighters, and also the recognition of the extreme danger we have to our communities from wildfire, and also the major concerns we have over evacuations. I am going to talk about that before I turn it over to my partner.

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Obviously, the Caldor Fire taught us many lessons, but one of the lessons it taught us was about evacuation in the Tahoe Basin. We have five counties in two states—and multiple jurisdictions within those five counties in two states—and there are only a few ways in and out of the Basin. When the Caldor evacuation happened mainly in South Lake Tahoe, California, we learned there was not a lot of communication and coordination between the two states and the multiple counties that were affected. After that, we came together as a group—mainly the Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chief started it—but getting together with our law enforcement partners, mainly the sheriffs.

I want to talk about who has the authority for evacuation. As previously mentioned, the TRPA does not have the authority for evacuation or to do an evacuation plan—that legal authority lies with the sheriff of each of the five counties here at the Lake. Unfortunately, California and Nevada are different; our terminology is different, and our laws are different, affecting evacuations. It brings a lot of confusion to those of us with jurisdictions right on the border of California, because of the terminology and the people going back and forth—so, we got together. You are looking at a slide with many different agencies, all fire and law enforcement agencies and counties. Initially, we started planning about a year ago,

and we said, "We have to come together and give the public a comprehensive plan, or a place they can go to see the plan, that we can share with them," because there was a lot of talk about nobody having a plan. Each of the jurisdictions has a plan—and had a plan—but it was not exactly coordinated with the neighboring jurisdictions or the neighboring counties or states—and that causes a lot of confusion. Initially when we came together, it was just fire and law enforcement; because initially in an emergency that is who is going to do it in partnership with each other—on a small scale or a large scale, which is where it starts. From there, the county emergency managers were brought in. You are going to hear from one of them today—one of our five partner counties. They bring a lot of tools and stuff to the table that come as the evacuation progresses. We are really close—Chief Sommers is going to talk about it in a minute—we are within a week of releasing a live document to the public that they can go to in the Tahoe Basin, regardless of jurisdiction, and they can get a basic understanding of how that is going to go. They can also get area-specific information—like reverse 911—because it is different in the different counties and in a different state. Each of the agencies has an appendix in this plan that takes you to the specific things for the jurisdiction or the area you live in. A lot of great work has been done on it. Chief Sommers is going to talk more about it, but it is going to be a public document that is going to be shared—a live document that can be updated as it goes. Like one of the agencies that submitted a draft—because it had not been approved by their governing board yet—as it gets officially adopted, then the draft marks will come off, and we will keep evolving and building off of that plan. The one thing to remember about the plan is that it is also set up as a public document. However, there is information we do not give the public, like we have very specific—for emergency responders only—what we call pre-attack maps that are amazing pieces of information. When neighboring agencies come into our jurisdiction to help us with a large incident, we can give them these pre-attack maps that show them their location, the different routes, the water sources, the infrastructure, the radio communication information, et cetera. We do not share those plans with the public because obviously there are security issues with that.

I do not want to candy coat it at all. We have talked about great work that has been done in the Tahoe Basin, especially with the TFFT. I want to give kudos to the agencies, because the best thing that happens here in the Basin—and I have worked a lot of places in my career in the fire service—and nobody has the cooperation between the multiple agencies that you see here in the Tahoe Basin. It is amazing, but at the same time we have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of work to do on fuels reduction, especially along evacuation corridors. Obviously, the Camp Fire in Paradise, California and the fire in Hawaii really woke everybody up about that and it got everybody looking at those evacuation corridors. When you drive up here through the Tahoe Basin, we have a lot of work to do, and we have to take it seriously. We have a lot of work to do on community fuel breaks, like Kat McIntyre was talking about earlier, the shaded fuel breaks. We showed you an example of that today, but we need those all the way around our community. We do not want to candy coat our situation by saying we are ready. We have a lot of work to do to make this place safe and protect our communities. Thank you for the opportunity, and I will let Chief Sommers give you more details on the plan.

Ryan Sommers, Fire Chief, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District:

Good afternoon, Chair, and Members of the Board. What we have here is approximately 62 pages, I will not read word for word this afternoon; we are going to summarize it quickly for you. The biggest thing about this plan is it describes the strategies for managing evacuations which exceed the day-to-day capabilities of the various public agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin—as you heard, the joint venture to put this plan together. In a nutshell, if you think about every county that touches Lake Tahoe, they extend beyond Lake Tahoe

over the ridge and down into valleys. The emergency managers from every county each have a county-wide plan. We lasered out the Tahoe Basin portion of those plans and put them into one document that we would like to release to the public once we go through one final revision of the document itself.

We went through a lot in the table of contents, now we are into the overview of this plan. It is a complex multijurisdictional effort that requires coordination between many disciplines, agencies, and organizations. With implementing this plan, we want to carry the highest priority of life safety. As we move through that, we have different planning areas. When I said we lasered out the county's plans for those areas—those are the areas you see on this slide. On the next slide there is a map. Think of this from the public's perspective of how many counties are touching Lake Tahoe when they are here visiting or they just moved here and they do not understand, when we say five counties, six counties, but five touching the water, two states. There is an example here. One of the best tools that has come out of this plan is a website—because I know not everybody is going to read a 62-page plan, especially if they are sitting on the deck enjoying the views of Lake Tahoe; this is not what they are going to be reading. Thanks to Placer County Office of Emergency Services (OES), this website is now live at TahoeAlerts.com. They can go there; they are going to see the map below that—I am sorry, they have to know what county they are in—but they are going to be able to click on the county they are in and that is going to take them to the perspective part of the plan, and they will know the details and what is set up for accommodations in the time of an evacuation.

The next step in this plan is a joint effort. Once it goes to the final review in the next week or so, we will be discussing how to push it out properly. There is talk of—at least in my fire district in Incline—we want this to be part of the short-term rentals (STR) agreement or permitting process in Washoe County. I would like to take it even farther and put this in escrow packets for new property owners that come into Incline and Crystal Bay, and everything that relates to the public safety that we have done for our respective jurisdictions around the Lake.

The last portion is a quick overview. This is the part of the plan that we are going to jump into specific areas. Then we have flyers on the next two slides of the stuff we implemented into the plan. Not only is it a Nevada thing, but it is also a California thing, and there are campaigns that they follow. There are Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) campaigns in here as well. There is very useful information in this plan, and we definitely hope to push it out in the next week. We can work with TRPA to make sure the Members of the Board get this plan.

Chief Lindgren:

I am going to jump back in for a second, Douglas County Sheriff Dan Coverley was going to join us today. He had a family emergency, so he is not able to join us; but he is a great partner for us here in Nevada—on board with what we are talking about. His emphasis being on a border county also is the fact that there are multijurisdictional agreements between law enforcement, and law enforcement is going to help each other with an evacuation and communication. I wanted to pop in on that because that is why he was on your agenda, but you do not see him here. Thank you.

Kelly Echeverria, Administrator, Washoe County Emergency Management:

Hello, thank you for having me here today. I will run you through all the amazing things we have been doing, and I appreciate the opportunity to share that with all of you. We are a

small crew of four—small but mighty. I say this to point out that we set up in functional ways in our office. One person is focused on mitigation. One person is focused on homeland security activities. One person carries the pocketbook, and then altogether, we do the rest. We are based in Reno out of this building that is co-located with Dispatch, but we do have alternate locations in the north and south of Washoe County. We plan, respond to recover from, all 13 of these identified hazards—not just wildland fire—although that is in our top three for risk and impact. We do go through all of our processes with an all-hazards perspective. Some of those processes are mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and prevention—obviously response gets a ton of attention—but each one of these aspects is integral to our success and our safety as a community. We operate in planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise. When Chief Sommers was talking about plans—we pulled this out of the plan we already had. It was a larger plan for the whole of Washoe County that had a specific portion dedicated to the Lake specifically.

We have regional priorities—and Chief Lindgren already touched on two of these as learning opportunities that came out of the Caldor Fire—operational coordination and communication are in our top two. Mass care services—when you evacuate people, they have to go somewhere. Typically, our community is incredibly resilient. We are able to stay with friends, in hotels, and so many people have recreational vehicles (RV). That is a part of our planning, because if they do go to an RV park, we want to capture them to provide them services, but we also stand-up shelters as part of evacuation processes, which we learned a lot in the Caldor Fire with that as well.

Evacuations specifically, they hit home for me. I have been evacuated myself in the Pine Haven Fire—which is in the Caughlin Ranch area, down in the basin of Reno—but still evacuations can be scary. At that point, I had worked for ten years in preparedness. I thought “I know what I am going to do,” and I threw that all out the window as the mayhem unfolded for me. That is just to say that this is personal for me. I take a lot of pride in the work we do for evacuations. I understand it from that perspective as well. With every incident we go through, we try to identify our gaps or what we could do better. We do that in our exercises as well, which I will talk about later.

The way it used to work for us in Washoe County, which may be different from other jurisdictions, is that an incident would occur. A threat to the population would be determined. A request for an evacuation alert would come to Washoe County Emergency Management as the alerting authority. We would activate our Emergency Shelter Council, which is comprised of a number of community partners. We determine a location and then we would send that alert. Each one of those steps takes a lot of time. When I started in this region working on disaster response 11 years ago (13?), I had a pager as part of the Emergency Shelter Council; I cannot imagine how much time it used to take. We are constantly trying to be more efficient and effective with our processes and procedures. That is to say that we have pre-identified locations. We work with Washoe County libraries to make sure we have access to those buildings. All we have to do is pick a library based on where the threat is and the direction, we want the population to go. The benefit of that is we have the keys to those buildings; the libraries are already a place of comfort for the community, a place to receive information, and they have bathrooms and kitchens. It really works well for us, and it minimizes that process. Alerts will include the type of information, the threat, where people are being sent—to a library, for example—how to find information. I will talk about how we continue to improve that process here in a second, but the tool that we use is CodeRED. You heard Chief Sommers talk about Placer County's amazing QR code that is being shared Basin-wide—where people have to know what county they are in, then they can find out which alerting tool is being used and sign up for alerts while visiting. We send it out through a myriad of ways. One of the common feedback items

I hear in Incline Village is, "I do not have cell service here," or "I do not have radio service there," but we operate within the technological means that we have available to us. We are sending it out through iPods, through FEMA Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS), emergency alerting system, wireless emergency alerts, radio, social media, email, text, voicemail—all the ways that we can reach you—we are trying, and we are using them.

One of the amazing things—and I am very proud of this program—actually, Chief Summers brought it to our attention, and we said we have to have this in Nevada—is the use of Perimeter. It is an application that originally in the pilot year was utilized by Washoe, Carson, Douglas, and Storey—all being counties and jurisdictions here at the Lake. We wanted to prioritize those areas, obviously not Storey County, but we were able to incorporate them as well. In the next year, we will be bringing on Pershing, Elko, Lyon, Nye, and Humboldt counties as well. The program will be available to all Nevada counties in the following year. It is a real time communication tool. It is a map for first responders. We have an app on our phones where we can draw a polygon of the perimeter of the fire, the evacuation area, areas potentially to be evacuated, any road closures that exist, preferred evacuation routes, shelter locations, incident command posts, and staging for first responders. There is a portion of it that first responders can see that the public cannot see. Once we publish information, the public can see anything that is published on the map and they do not need an app, they just go to PerimeterMap.com, and we have embedded it in a number of ways throughout our website. Like I said, we can draw that polygon—it is real-time collaboration. It came out of the numerous fires in California; it was developed by a lady over there who has family in both law enforcement and fire and saw a need for this. It requires very low connectivity. If first responders are unable to put the information on the map because they are busy putting the wet stuff on the hot stuff or evacuating the community; we revert to how we used to do it, which is they call us and tell us what area it is and we put it on the map. We thought this would be helpful, especially for an area that has a lot of visitors. The old means of communication used to be: "If you live between First Street and Second Street and Gibraltar and Orion Street, evacuate now." My neighborhood has weird street names; I have been there seven years, and I would not know if I am in that evacuation area. To expect visitors to understand if they are in an area that has been described verbally is difficult, especially when they should be evacuating. This allows them to pull up the website—we can drop it in the alert that is sent out, and they can see where they are in relation to any one of these areas. Are they close to the fire? Are they in the evacuation area? Are they in the area to potentially be evacuated? If there are road closures, then they know to avoid those routes in and out of the neighborhood. We can drop it in the app, we can put it out through CodeRED, through social media, it is on our website, it is on EmergencyWashoe.com as well.

This slide is a reminder that all of those people have to go somewhere, so Emergency Management also coordinates through the Emergency Shelter Council where those people are going to go, and how do we support them. A big issue in the Caldor Fire was pets. We have also acquired pet-specific shelter trailers. If a location is chosen based on population that does not necessarily allow pets, we can still keep them close to their owners, which is always our goal.

We did do a full-scale evacuation exercise last year in Incline Village. It was scheduled, believe it or not, for 2020. If you recall, something happened in 2020 that went on for quite a while; so, we pushed it back and did it as soon as we could, which was last year. We engaged partners from all around the Basin and across state lines, as well as down in Reno and Sparks—knowing that should support be needed for the Basin, it would come from those areas. The town of Truckee was there as well. It was really successful. We practiced evacuating Upper Tyner. We had Sheriff's deputies going door to door, knocking and letting

people know what we were doing, and that they could go to the evacuation center, which actually was a Preparedness Fair. It was a wildfire scenario. We tested out our alerts, we utilized the media. First responders were in the field and set up incident command as well as the emergency operation center. We did an after-action review (AAR). We performed without challenges in most of our goals that we were testing. Most of the areas for improvement were internal communication, so nothing that the public would have noticed—it was our processes in our computer systems. We learned to overlay the perimeter map with the sheriff's office—CalTopo map—which is how they log what doors they have knocked on and who has been evacuated.

We are also updating our mass care and evacuation plan. It is a five-phase process based on funding, not a lack of will. In the first phase, we incorporated non-congregate sheltering and that came out of the Coronavirus of Disease 2019 (COVID-19) funding. We were able to incorporate that into our plan. Phase two was identifying evacuation, shelter, mass migration sites, green sites that could be converted—like a field where we could put up a tent—and mapping those. Phase three will be—once we identify funding—including detailed mapping of each of those locations. Down to where cots are, if you have different types of cots like bariatric cots, if you are incorporating pets, how that all changes, and that is on the next step. Phase four, we are changing, because we want to do a road map to resilience. We have looked at what a lot of our partners around the country and across state lines are doing, and we want to incorporate that into our own resilience. We built something called the Dashboard Of Regional Agencies—or DORA as we like to call it, because there are a lot of maps. It shows the perimeter map on the very first tab that you open. On the side it shows all the alerts that have been sent. You can see all the information with what has been sent out on alerts on this one page. It also has the Alert Wildfire page as the next tab—you can see the wildfire cameras in both California and Nevada on that page. We are working to incorporate NDOT's maps, NVroads—waiting on one last permission for that. In the meantime, we have Waze, which still gives you pretty good information. We have windy.com, air quality maps, weather service maps—basically anything that will help the public have a better situational awareness of what is going on around them and that was the real purpose of that. It is very exciting. We launched it on Monday; it is on our website, if you are able to go to that.

We also created the Emergency Management (EM) Basin Group. One of the issues that happened when Caldor was happening, the Dixie Fire also was happening. One was to the southwest of Reno, one was to the northwest of Reno, and both wanted to come to Reno, and we said, "Who are our counterparts across the State line?" And we did not know. This EM Basin Group came out of that. We meet quarterly, all the emergency managers from Carson, Douglas, El Dorado, Placer, Nevada County, town of Truckee, Alpine. We come together and we share ideas, we invite each other to our exercises, we incorporate one another in planning processes as well. All these evacuation plans that have been compiled in this wonderful document, we had all already shared those with each other, but now we have a one stop shop for where that can be, instead of "Where is that email that so and so sent me?" There is a benefit to planning and training together, because then we are familiar with one another. In the Caldor/Dixie fire scenario, I was in regular contact with my counterpart in the Town of Truckee and it was really beneficial as to—what is California doing? Where are the people going? Are you thinking they are coming to us? So, we can lean forward in our efforts, get that Emergency Shelter Council stood up, and have things ready for when people arrive. We are working to put together a roadside fuels reduction mapping tab of DORA. I know you have heard a lot about a bunch of different maps today, but we want to highlight the awesome work our fire protection districts are doing. North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District is meeting with us and our GIS team later next week, to figure out how we can accurately capture—with NV Energy as well—roadside fuels reduction.

Not everything that we are doing, just what is happening on the roadsides—because a lot of fires start along the roadside. We thought that would be an excellent map to highlight. Then we are standing up an Events Working Group. That is our partners—we took best practices from Clark County—do not tell them, it will go to their head—but also City of Austin, and South by Southwest—and looked at how can we better get first responders, representatives from each—fire, law enforcement, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), if they are available, at the event. I think we are going to try to test this out with Fourth of July. Someone from that event would be embedded with this group. Emergency management is there, weather service is there. We are all coordinating how to support the event and leaning forward should anything go wrong; we will be ready to respond. I think it will also give us a better pulse on how to plan in the future if we need to adjust our numbers in our evacuation plan based on what we see.

We want to do an evacuation study as well, also pending identifying a funding source for that. We want to look at traffic modeling to identify our top areas of concern—specifically in Crystal Bay and Incline Village—so we can mitigate those or preposition resources to ensure a swifter and more effective evacuation. It is something we need to look at. We are pulling data, until such funding is identified, from wastewater numbers and trying to identify peak population numbers in Incline Village and Crystal Bay for any given time, so Fourth of July probably specifically—so that we can plan for that peak number, but it is based on scientific data and not a guess of how many people were in the region. We are also looking at cell data and working with our sheriff's office to determine car vehicle numbers as well. We are pulling data from a number of places, and we want to use that in the study. We also want to provide the public a chance to provide input into that study. A lot of our greatest accomplishments in emergency management have come through conversations with the public and ideas they have had that we have been able to incorporate. I think that is a valuable tool in part of that study and something we definitely want to incorporate. That is not it for us, but that is it for us.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. We will get to the questions; and for the record, we love our counterparts in Clark County. Committee, any questions? Senator Titus, you can go first.

Senator Titus:

I have a lot of questions, but I am happy to go first if that is okay. Thank you all for being at the table and actually being at the table together. I want to clarify something. You said your current combined evacuation plan or emergency plan is still not complete. You did not have one, a combined one, prior to the Caldor Fire; or did you have one and it was not public? Because I am hearing that all of a sudden you have this now, but it is not up yet. They can access it. Can you tell me when you actually started working on this as a planned effort?

Chief Lindgren:

Yes, to a lot of it. We started working on a joint plan about a year ago. We all have had our own plans within our own jurisdictions or our own boundaries. They were shared amongst others, but there has never been a one stop shop, that the public can go to and look at a plan for the entire Basin; because anything that happens in the Tahoe Basin affects all of us—whether it is California or Nevada or one county or the other. Since about a year ago, we have been working on it. It will be done within the week. We have the final draft for the Committee to look at right now; it came out this morning. Big kudos to Chief Lilienthal from

El Dorado County, California, Office of Emergency Services, who has been the coordinator of the group and putting the document together. It will be live with that QR code we showed you earlier from Placer—you can access and see the whole plan. We are really close to having the whole thing.

Senator Titus:

Great, thank you for that. Also thank you for clarifying that, indeed, the TRPA is not in charge of emergency plans or evacuation plans.

Chief Lindgren:

Correct.

Senator Titus:

Neither is NDOT, our Highway Department. After the Caldor Fire, listening to the citizens that live here and the concerns, I actually reached out to our State resources and got a legal opinion on exactly who is in charge of evacuation plans, who has the authority to create one, who does it fall in—and interestingly enough, NRS 414.040 creates the Division of Emergency Management (DEM)—and our directors here in the crowd, I do not mean to throw you under the bus, Mr. Fogerson—however, it says it is the DEM—requires the DEM to develop State emergency plans. It also requires you to have the emergency operations—ensure the activities of State and local governments, agencies, and private organizations are coordinated. The authority falls into the local governments and local agencies. Local, it says here includes—NRS 239C requires each political subdivision to adopt and maintain an emergency response plan, and it has to be filed with our State DEM. I think one of the confusions was who was in charge of getting these plans. Where is the repository for the plans? Are they indeed being coordinated? As you have pointed out time and time again at these meetings, this is multiple counties, two states engaged, and finally—on something this important—it is critical that you have to be coordinated. It sounds like to me, we had these plans all in separate silos, without that communication of even knowing who your counterparts are in the next county, let alone in the next state. Thank you for hearing that, rising to that, and actually communicating.

Along that same line though in previous emergencies—I was Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) Medical Director for 30 years in my county, and I am still the public health officer in my county. One of the things we find is that trying to communicate in radio signals using the same—so you have something figured out that if you have radio dispatch, whether you use dispatch from the sheriff versus the fire dispatch, or are they all the same? Do they all coordinate when you dispatch and have those communications out?

Chief Lindgren:

The answer to that is no, because it depends on the location. I can speak for Douglas County. It depends on the location in the county. In Douglas County, sheriff and law enforcement are dispatched out of the same room in the same building, and it is coordinated. In different areas that could be different. For instance, I will speak for Chief Sommers. He is dispatched from Grass Valley Command Center in California by CAL FIRE, and he is in Washoe County, Nevada. It depends on where you are at and how that gets coordinated. It is all supposed to go through the State DEM and Chief Fogerson's shop and it does eventually—to say it is seamless is probably not true. We have a lot of work to do on dispatching and that coordination, but we are coming a long way.

Senator Titus:

I am happy to be part of a discussion of solutions on that one. Finally, the State of Nevada 511 highway thing—do you have any association with them? When I look at 511 for road conditions—to drive up here where the snow is when I go skiing. Do you coordinate fires with 511 also?

Ms. Echeverria:

Yes, we do. We are tied in with NDOT and our partners there. We also realize that a lot of times, like during snow season, they are out mitigating road hazards. In every incident, we touch base and make sure we are operating along the preferred lines of communication with our partners at NDOT.

Senator Titus:

Nevada Department of Transportation also has a road spraying system for fuels reduction. They already do that, so are you coordinating with NDOT on that?

Ms. Echeverria:

First step is we are starting with North Lake Tahoe and Truckee Meadows Fire in building the map, and then we will incorporate NDOT—yes, definitely.

Senator Titus:

I know they are out there, and they are doing it. Thank you.

Chief Lindgren:

I do want to clarify one other question—part of what you said. Talking about the authority in NRS, you are 100 percent correct on the authority for the plan. Where confusion comes in is the legal authority to call for an evacuation lies with the sheriff in that jurisdiction.

Senator Titus:

Or the Governor—I am looking at it.

Chief Lindgren:

Correct. It starts with the sheriff and then goes to the Governor when you get into a much larger situation—but it starts with the sheriff, always. That is true in California also—both states.

Chief Sommers:

If I may, this plan we put together was not to supersede any emergency plan that is in existence. It was to laser out the plans of the county and specifically apply them to the Tahoe Basin and have a one stop shop, if you will.

Senator Titus:

I know, and I think what you are doing is fantastic. Thank you very much.

Ms. Echeverria:

If I might provide one more point of clarification. The authority to call for an evacuation—unless it is the Governor in a declared disaster, only the Governor can order a mandatory evacuation. It gets confusing when you are using the words mandatory or voluntary. But outside of that authority, a fire chief can, through fire code, then call for an evacuation as well. In Washoe, it is the sheriff's office that then carries out that evacuation.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. Vice Chair or Senator Scheible, any questions? No questions.

I like the way you are doing that—where you laser it out and say, “We have our own county evacuation plans, but we have to specifically say what we are doing here for the Tahoe Basin.” The fact that you have gone to all of the counties on the local plan—and we are going to hear from the State plan—hopefully that coordination is happening at the State level as well. Then I was thinking, you guys need to keep practicing. I think it was General Patton that said, “A plan is a useful thing until you engage the enemy.” Where Mike Tyson said, “Everybody has got a plan until they get punched in the face.” I commend you on the work, and I am glad to hear it. We did clear up a few things—that TRPA is not the source of anybody's misgivings about evacuations or fire preparedness. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—PRESENTATION REGARDING STATE LAKE TAHOE BASIN EVACUATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES

We are up to Item VIII. That was the presentation from the local plan, now we are going to hear a presentation regarding the State Lake Tahoe Basin evacuation planning activities.

Dave Fogerson, Chief, Nevada Office of the Military, Nevada Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety (DPS):

Good afternoon, Chair, Committee Members. I have had this role since October 2020. Before that I came from East Fork Fire Protection District, as a Deputy Fire Chief of Operations and the County Emergency Manager for Douglas County. This will be my 30th fire season along the Sierra front, where I managed the Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators. I have been the Secretary for Northern Nevada Fire Chiefs, Vice President for Nevada Fire Chiefs, and a member of Lake Tahoe Fire Chiefs. My involvement is a twofold one, from a historical perspective along with the role of the State Emergency Management agencies between us and California, to support our local governments.

Before I get going, I want to address a couple of items Senator Titus brought up if that is okay; that was regarding communications and the 911 system. The Nevada DEM always been designated as the spot from the Governor's Office that is responsible for 911 coordination. Last Legislative Session, you blessed us with the ability to finally hire a 911 Coordinator; so, we got the first Statewide 911 Coordinator hired in Nevada a few months ago. Tawanna Wade-Gerchman (“T”) comes to us from DPS where she was a Dispatch Supervisor. It is one of those things we have been responsible for but did not have the position to fill it; so, we kind of haphazardly did it. Now with “T” in charge of that, hopefully we will work forward on that. Next week, we are going to Clark County to do an after-action review for the 911 outage we had through all the Clark County Public Safety agencies a couple of months ago.

The other piece, which is a component of ours, you heard about from Chief Lindgren, we also employ what is called the State-Wide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC). The SWIC has been working with Chief Sommers and Lake Tahoe Regional Chiefs for about five years—going on six years now—to look at a regional communication plan to figure out how to make that communication system work better. We have federal partners called the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Administration (CISA); they are part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that has been helping us work on that plan. It was tabled for a little bit because of COVID-19, and some personalities involved. That is something else that is in the works that we can move forward with.

I am with Nevada Emergency Management Homeland Security; we are a very proud partner in the Office of the Military. Please make sure General Berry heard me say that. We are going to talk about the holistic role of emergency management, evacuation lines of effort, what the role of the State Emergency Management Agency is, what we have done so far, and what we are going to continue to do to support our local governments (Agenda Item VIII).

Emergency management is designed to add an organizational structure where one does not exist, because an incident has occurred that has made it not work right. You look at a wildland fire—if it is one acre, the fire service can take care of that. It is not a big deal. They have got the organizational structure already—of their battalion chiefs, engine captains, engineers, or firefighters—to take care of that. Now we take a wildland fire of over 1,000 acres. We evacuate 100 homes and now we are having to build an organizational structure on the fly that not only addresses that wildland fire effort, but also addresses the evacuation effort, alerting and warning, sheltering, and how to take those people back to their homes. It is going to address how to rebuild those homes. If you look at the Camp Fire, people still have not moved back into that area, because they have not been able to rebuild their homes. That is our large issue right now in Hawaii—from talking to our FEMA counterparts that are embedded in Hawaii—trying to figure out how to rebuild all these homes these people have lost. How do you get the supply chain, and how do you make all this work? Building that organizational structure on a fly is what an emergency manager does with the goal of putting it back into the original organizational structure and handing it back to the people as soon as we can, so we can step out of that situation.

We are responsible for coordination and encouraging participation. Logistics is a big piece of what we do. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we ran a warehouse; we got all the personal protective equipment (PPE); the ventilators; and the vaccines. That was what emergency management did for us. During Caldor, we moved in wildland fire resources here because Chief Lindgren had to send his firefighters to the Caldor Fire. We were able to bring up firefighters from Clark County and City of Las Vegas to staff the Tahoe Douglas Fire Stations. That way his crews that had wildland training could go to the Fire. The Southern Nevada crews that did not have wildland fire training could backfill the fire stations for us. Then we were worried about continuity in government. How do we make sure tomorrow still exists with all the different things we are required to do as a government? That is really what emergency management is supposed to be about. We get drug into a lot of other things along the lines, but this is the main crux of what we do.

We always focus on incidents being locally executed, State guided, and federally supported. When people start talking about evacuation plans—we do not want to write a state evacuation plan, because I cannot write a plan from Carson City that is going to work for Pioche, the City of North Las Vegas, the City of Sparks, or the City of West Wendover. We want to make sure the locals are doing those plans, so we engage with our local emergency managers; by NRS 414, every county is required to have a county emergency manager. We

work with those 17 county emergency managers to help them do what they need to do, allowing them to locally execute. We guide them, and then when we need assistance, we go to the federal government partners to get that assistance. I think this is also partially ingrained in anybody that has either been born in Nevada or lived here more than a few years—we try to let the government closest, the people, do some of the work rather than telling people what to do, especially when we look at the beltway.

Regarding traditional evacuation lines of efforts, this slide explains who, where, and the efforts performed. Like you heard before, ordering evacuations has to be done by the incident commander—whether it is a fire chief, a law enforcement officer, or public works. Whoever is managing the incident is going to say, “I need to get these civilians out of here for life safety issues.” That is going to happen at the incident command post. Law enforcement is going to be responsible for that evacuation, and sometimes it is with sworn deputies, sometimes search and rescue teams that are volunteer members of the sheriff's office, sometimes it is with a mix of the two. When we start looking at what an emergency manager is responsible to do, this will be back in the emergency operations center (EOC). It is important to notice that the incident command post is going to be in the field. It is not going to be a very pleasant environment; it is going to be hot, windy, rainy—whatever the weather conditions are is where these folks are making these very haphazard decisions at times because they do not have all the information. I use haphazard, not meaning that they are not making good decisions, but they do not have all the facts to make the decisions. They are in the elements, so they have harder times doing that. They are making the best decisions they can at the time. Then when we start looking at these other items, they come back to the EOC where we are sitting inside of a nice, air-conditioned room and we are in a calm, serene environment. No one is yelling at each other. There is a different ambience there. I use this example a lot to remind our employees that when someone calls you from an incident command post, they are probably not having the best day of their life; so, we have to cut them some slack with that. At the EOC, this is where we talk about alerting and warning. This is where California stepped up their game a couple of years ago following the Camp Fire and trying to make sure they got alerting and warnings out faster. That is where you saw that CAL FIRE logo that is in the evacuation plan at “Ready, Set, Go”. Trying to make general terminologies, that way it fits everybody. One of the things I was blessed with—I was on the Congressional Wildfire Committee and then I have been working with Chief Zagaris, who retired out of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). We were working with the fire administration because we are trying to figure out how to use terms for evacuations that the general public understands best. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has been working with our hurricane states to try to see what we can learn from them to make the wildland fires the same way; and “Ready, Set, Go” is the way we want to move forward with that.

We are also responsible for reporting to Public Works, NDOT, and Caltrans; because while law enforcement is going knocking door to door to make sure people know there is an evacuation, we still have to get those people out of there. During the Caldor evacuations, the City of South Lake Tahoe had deputies at all the intersections within the City of South Lake Tahoe. Once you hit the Nevada State line we had free traffic, because we controlled the intersections and the street lights; and we had National Guard members, DPS, and NDOT out there pushing the traffic down. The traffic jam was on the other side where those things were not all readily taken care of at the time. We had thought about those on our side because we planned a couple of days before.

We have to coordinate with the Red Cross, Nevada National Guard, Health and Human Services, because every incident we have has an engagement with health. Whether that is opening a shelter and making sure we have care for the residents there; or what is the

smoke level, and what messaging do we want to push to the public about the smoke? What about an evacuation center—that is the first thing we are going to do is we are going to say, “Let us get everyone out of there and send them to the Raley’s parking lot.” That is the evacuation center—that might not be a shelter, but that is a place where we are going to tell people right now to go, until we can figure out where that shelter is. Once we decide to open a shelter, then we can work on that part. Those were local government decisions, but that is still going to happen at the EOC at the county or city level, and then get fed up to us at the State.

What about food, water, animal care, and coordinating public information? Especially having a bi-state incident like this and you add the federal partners into it—the Joint Information Center (JIC) that Chief Sommers talked about is really important—that way we provide one single message to the general public. That is generally where we get caught; because someone will say something, instead of vetting it through all of us. Working on that is always a part that is under construction, to make sure we do better at that. Then we are worried about family assistance centers and reunifications because we are going to get calls and law enforcement is going to get missing person calls. They are going to get calls like, “Do you know what shelter my husband is at? Do you know what shelter my kids went to?” We saw that with the Camp Fire. Originally, they thought they had 1,000 or more deceased, because of all the calls they had about missing people. They were able to work through that to get the number down lower. That Family Assistance Center/Reunification—unfortunately, we have had to practice it through 1 October, and it is a pretty ingrained process in how we do that now through NRS language.

Then we look at the long-term recovery. Where are we going to house these people? It is one thing to put them in a shelter for a couple of days at a school, but if 400 homes have burned down up here, where do those people go to now? How do we take care of them until we figure out how and where they are going to rebuild? I live in Gardnerville, and I have a neighbor that moved here from the Camp Fire area because he was unable to rebuild his house, so he had to relocate. We are going to see tons of that happen if we have a large incident here as well. When you think of these evacuations, we are focused on the wildland fire threat, but we do the same events at the Stateline casinos as we see down in southern Nevada. Why would we not also make sure that this evacuation plan works for those catastrophic terrorist events, the same as it does for a wildland fire. I know the fire chiefs and the sheriffs have done a good job of making sure that is a key component of it. While we are talking wildland fire here, the evacuation plan really does fit any type of disaster that might strike us.

The State emergency management role—our job is to support our local emergency managers to make sure they have the tools they need. We form a policy group to keep the Governor informed and declare the state of emergency as necessary. We coordinate State response through the Nevada Operations Center. That is the picture of the State Operations Center when we were open for—I believe this was Hurricane Hilary last year. We coordinate with Cal OES for cross-border needs. We have a simple one-page agreement that is signed from governor to governor, and we can move resources back and forth between California and Nevada without fear of litigation or the cost reimbursement part. My California peer Nancy and I talk every two weeks; my Arizona peer and I talk every week. That cross-border coordination that did not exist prior, now with personality changes has stepped up really well. We also act as fiduciary agents for any resources moved between states. If we get resources out of California, we send resources to California. We become the fiduciary agent for paying for all that and then seeking the reimbursement. We are also the nexus for federal assistance.

What have we done with evacuations so far? Regarding the Caldor Fire, the day the evacuation happened my mother was passing away in Arizona. We did the morning brief in the EOC. We had spent the weekend prepping. We had Nevada Highway Patrol, the Nevada National Guard, and NDOT working on an evacuation plan for us just in case it happened. We did the morning brief, "If things are really getting bad and it is going to hit the Basin in a couple of days—let us start planning for that." I did the brief, I left, and went down to go see mom. Within the Office of Military, there is the military side that does emergency management as well; it is called the Joint Operations Center (JOC). Brett Compston was the Director of the JOC at the time, so I passed command over to Brett from the State to manage. Brett was in a meeting with the Governor and the Chief of Staff at the time trying to talk through issues when he saw a tweet saying that South Lake Tahoe was being evacuated. Brett had to jump into panic mode of making this work right now.

Within a few days of that evacuation, we did an after-action review with Cal OES. We had that hosted by the Centers for Homeland Defense and Security; they are part of the Naval Postgraduate School. We had FEMA Region Nine, Cal OES, and us on the phone to talk about how to make sure we make improvements if this happens again. We had sent agency reps to each other's EOCs, but we were about four hours late to get to each other's EOCs. Then we went over and visited with Cal OES, met their leadership team, and made sure we ingrained the stuff we talked about virtually. Then we workshopped and we brought Cal OES over to Incline Village and we talked through it again to see what we needed to do; we had a lot of those key partners there. We have been discussing with our county emergency managers how we can best support them. The Cal OES Director, the FEMA Regional Administrator, and I had more discussions about how to support local government—whether it is the fire chief, the sheriff, or the emergency manager—to make sure they have the tools they need.

Then we did a workshop here a little while ago. It is kind of funny, we were going to do it in January, but Cal OES was worried because they said, "It snows in January in Lake Tahoe." The day we had picked in January was perfect. The day we moved it to snowed in March or April. We had Cal OES, Caltrans, Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs, law enforcement, public health—we had everyone we needed at the table, and we talked through that—our first responders are doing that evacuation plan. Now we need to put other parts of that together, for example once everyone is evacuated, we need the emergency managers to know how to shelter, do alerting and warnings, et cetera. Now we are working on helping them with that plan and helping our local emergency managers on how to do things better.

Our next phase is going to be working on a support plan between California and us. That way it is delineated; it is not based upon Nancy and I being friends and knowing one another, but we have it in a document between the two directors on how we move resources back and forth, how we do all this together in the future, to make sure we ingrain this, so we support our local governments.

Lastly, I would not be your emergency manager if I did not remind you to have a 72-hour disaster kit. Not only do we have the wildland fire threat, but earthquakes and floods seem to like to hit us. Please make sure you have a disaster kit. If you go to our website or ready.gov, it has a list of what you should have in your disaster kit. Thank you for listening to the presentation. I will take any questions.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. We are getting late in the day. Any questions?

Senator Titus:

I want to acknowledge your service, thank you. I know you are not going to be in that seat very long. You have put a lot of years in Dave, and I have always appreciated it.

Chief Fogerson:

Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Vice Chair or Senator Scheibel, any questions? [There were no additional questions.]

Do you contact your Oregon, Idaho, and Utah counterparts regularly as well?

Chief Fogerson:

Yes—Oregon, Idaho, and Utah all the time. Those population centers are not quite as dense next to us. Especially Utah regarding Elko, because they can get resources for us out of Salt Lake City faster than we can get resources from Washoe County. Long borders with not very many people. That was my only question. I am not seeing any other questions from the Committee. It was a good presentation. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM IX—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Daly:

That brings us to Item IX, which is our second period of public comment. Please remember to state and spell your name for the record. Limit your comments to two minutes. We will time each speaker during public comment. If we have anyone wishing to provide public comment, come on up to the table. Proceed when you are ready.

Tobi Tyler, Tahoe Area Group, Sierra Club:

Now for something completely different. I sent a letter yesterday that provides background regarding the court case we recently won. We won this case because the Lahontan Water Board refused to abide by their Basin plan. A 2014 amendment to the Basin plan was a big deal, and many commenters wanted assurances that the Water Board was not going to just grant herbicide permits without fully examining non-chemical methods first. As the ruling states, and I quote, "The pesticide prohibition in the Basin plan itself reflects the extreme care with which Lake Tahoe must be treated." In short, the Water Board, with a huge push from the League and TRPA, did not abide by their own rulebook of regulations, so we sued and won. Now they are ignoring the Judge's ruling and plan to continue with the Control Methods Test (CMT) project as if the ruling never happened. The fact is that the Judge's ruling did not just order the herbicide permit to be vacated or voided, it ordered vacated the Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Impact Reports (EIS/EIR) that was the basis for the entire CMT project. So, the effort to continue with the project as if the ruling never happened should be stopped immediately. Let me be very clear, Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association (TKPOA) can use non-chemical methods right now, without the CMT, and even without a permit from the Water Board. They have always been able to use these methods but have refused. Instead, they tried to use subterfuge in the form of this test to get around the regulations. Everyone wants an easy answer to this decades-old problem at the Keys. But until these lagoons with their stagnant, warm, nutrient-filled waters are dealt with head-on and with creative solutions, Lake Tahoe will continue to be

plagued by the Tahoe Keys weeds. Please inform TRPA, they must comply with the Judge's ruling, cease and desist with the CMT, and tell TKPOA to implement non-chemical methods at an appropriate and effective scale immediately. Thank you. (Agenda Item IX A)

Ellie Waller, previously identified:

Back to the oversight of TRPA. Now that you have heard the presentations, it makes no sense to add more buildings and more people to Tahoe. The risks are obvious, which is why it is so frightening Tahoe's policymakers are eager to ask for more dollars for an EIP program that often produces plans and strategies that are revised with no deliverables or accountability. Failed policies that favor tourism over environment and development over conservation must end. I will give you an example of EIP Project Number 4343 propping up a Council—TRPA was a fiscal agent for the Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council with no governance or structure. How is this a project? All will benefit from this Oversight Committee's use of its authority to mandate a realistic update of the Tahoe Basin's carrying capacity, which will greatly help everyone you heard from today. It is time to amend the TRPA code of ordinances as well, to modernize some of the thresholds that address evacuation, over-tourism impacts, human and infrastructure capacities, et cetera. It is only possible with an updated impact study and report. Hundreds of amendments to date have not been achieving the desired results of the outdated 2012 plan. At the very least, as mentioned, existing conditions need to be cataloged and used by all these agencies. Thank you for mentioning the 7-7-7 plan, which will be asked to fund \$7 million federal dollars for 20 years for transportation. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's policy, DP 5.4, deserves to be brought before you. An ongoing regional funding source or sources dedicated to transportation for the Tahoe region is reasonably expected to meet these needs; this expired in December of 2023. You really need to take notice that some of these policies, I believe, need to come to your attention. Thank you.

Brett Tibbetts, previously identified:

I must be completely missing something. How can you say that the TRPA does not have responsibility for evacuation and wildfires? It certainly does not have to put out the wildfires or be doing what Scott Lindgren does during an evacuation, but the TRPA and NDOT can certainly screw up an evacuation—which is what they were trying to do and take away two lanes from Highway 50. I am lost. Why the rush to absolve TRPA? It is screwing up evacuations and it will go back and try to do so again. Chairman Daly, you can continue to belittle us. None of you live here. I know Senator Titus knows the Lake well and she is dedicated, but none of the rest of you know the Lake. None. You can accuse us of being just focused on our backyards. We do not have fences in our backyards like you do in Sparks. The gentleman Shane from the Nevada Department of Forestry led you to believe that all the burn piles were gone. They are not. I walk three miles every day in my backyard. You come with me on a tour. There are thousands upon thousands of burn piles, some ten feet high that still sit there; and that is what brought down the Phillips Track. So please do not belittle us. We know a lot more about Tahoe than you do. It is really quite appalling that you just want to accept these people that come up here all the time and say what a good job they are doing. You do not have enough knowledge to challenge them, and you should.

Mike Vollmer, California Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and Executive Director, Tahoe Resource Conservation District:

I guess it is good evening, it was afternoon a minute ago, Chair Daly, and the Members of the Committee. I have worked in wildfire in Lake Tahoe since 2002. I am a founding member of the TFFT from 2008, when I worked right here at TRPA. There have been a lot of

great presentations today and I wanted to acknowledge that, so thank you. I would like to say a little—I just wanted to add a little context to your day of forestry and the context of forest management. I know that you have seen a lot, you may have heard that term being used today, but it is important to know that there are many different kinds of forest management. They are not all the same. When you hear people talking about forest management, increasing wildfire risk, and contributing to higher intensity wildfire, the science is actually talking about industrial forest management, not all forest management. I guess what I am here to tell you today is that what we are doing in Lake Tahoe is not that. I would categorize what we are doing in Lake Tahoe as restoration forestry. We have a second growth forest that was left behind from the Comstock, which you also heard about today. We have an even age stand that is about 150 years old. We have overstocked forests—that is too many trees in the forest. The goal of the forest management here was stated in one of the presentations today, but, in my mind, it is also to grow old growth forest and habitat. It is to create forests that are resilient to bark beetles, climate change, and drought. Since the early 2000s, we have treated over tens of thousands of acres here in the Tahoe Basin for forest health and forest fuels reduction, predominantly to protect communities from wildfire. However, forest treatments are not the only tool in the toolbox. Home hardening, defensible space—

Chair Daly:

That was two minutes. You can submit in writing as well but go ahead and wrap up.

Mr. Vollmer:

Home hardening is a great thing but not a standalone solution. I wanted to tell you that all parts of the puzzle are needed, including fuel reduction—including fuel reduction in evacuation zones—defensible space, home hardening, effective first response, and fire adapted communities. These puzzles all work together to make this thing work. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has been a great partner in the TFFT. Thank you for your time. Have a great weekend.

Elisabeth Lernhardt, previously identified:

Good evening, Senators, and Chair. Senator Titus called it correctly last meeting; the people of Tahoe are fed up with the rule of TRPA as it currently is. El Dorado County Supervisor Brooke Lane has called for action. She feels, like many, that a tremendous amount of money was wasted by an organization that has become itself the problem. The affordable housing crisis, to name one, was created by TRPA's restrictive rules of building, for example, not allowing duplexes, et cetera. Transportation is another need that has more plans on the shelf than buses running. Still, TTD is asking for more money; in order to levy this tax TRPA is avoiding the mandated vote to approve the 7-7-7 plan. Their consultant advised them that a vote by the people in both states would not deliver these taxes. That is why they are lobbying legislators from both sides of the state line to circumvent the mandatory votes—Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 5 was such a bill passed in the 82nd Assembly. Supervisor Lane went beyond talking when she announced that El Dorado County in South Lake Tahoe would form a Joint Powers Authority between the county and the city to run transportation, but TRPA is not yielding without a fight. They informed her that they are not willing to give up the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) funds, and with federal grant money of \$4.5 million and California State money of \$3.5 million, it remains to be seen where this power struggle leads, but it is not helping the residents of Tahoe. Meanwhile, Lake Link mainly funded by Douglas County is not providing much service to us. Yet El Dorado County who did not contribute financially and has service up to the "Y" is

complaining about not getting enough service. As long as the same people have their fingers in this pot, nothing will change. A new approach needs to be taken.

The following written comments were submitted for the record:

- Diane Becker (Agenda Item IX B)
- Niobe Burden Austere (Agenda Item IX C)
- Robert W. Byren (Agenda Item IX D)
- Yolanda Knaak (Agenda Item IX E)
- Alex Tsigdinos (Agenda Item IX F)

Chair Daly:

Anybody else here in person for public comment? Seeing none, BPS, is anybody on the phone?

BPS:

To provide public comment, please press *9 now on your phone to take your place in the queue. Chair, there are no callers to provide public comment at this time.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. With that, we will close Item IX.

That brings us to Item X, which is adjournment. That concludes our meeting for today. Thank you to all of our presenters, members of the public, and Members of this Committee. Before we adjourn, I would like to remind everyone that our next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2024, and we will focus predominantly on water quality issues. We will most likely be holding that meeting here at the TRPA office in Stateline, but please check the Committee's website to confirm our next meeting location.

AGENDA ITEM X—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Harper
Manager of Research Policy Assistants

Alysa M. Keller
Senior Principal Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Skip Daly, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item II A	Doug Flaherty, Tahoe Clean Air.org	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II B	Ellie Waller, Nevada Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II C	Ronda Tycer, Incline Village Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II D	Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II E	Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II F	Elisabeth Lernhardt, Zephyr Cove Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II G	Kristina Hill, Lake Tahoe Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II H	Dana Tibbets	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II I	Pamela Tsigdinos, Full-time Resident, North Lake Tahoe, Nevada	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IV	Wilfred J. Lewis Jr., Administrator, State Public Works Division Brian Wacker, Deputy Administrator, State Public Works Division Bob Ragar, Chief of Planning, State Public Works Department	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email to: Library@lcb.state.nv.us
Agenda Item V	Kimberly Caringer, Chief Partnerships Officer, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Kat McIntyre, Ph.D., Environmental Improvement Program Department Manager, Forest Health Program Manager, TRPA	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email to: Library@lcb.state.nv.us
Agenda Item VI	Kat McIntyre, Ph.D., Environmental Improvement Program Department Manager, Forest Health Program Manager, TRPA	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email to: Library@lcb.state.nv.us

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item VII	Scott Lindgren, Fire Chief, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email to: Library@lcb.state.nv.us
Agenda Item VIII	Dave Fogerson, Chief, Nevada Office of the Military, Nevada Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX A	Tobi Tyler, Tahoe Area Group, Sierra Club	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IX B	Diane Becker	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IX C	Niobe Burden Austere	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IX D	Robert W. Byren	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IX D	Yolanda Knaak	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IX E	Alex Tsigdinos	Written Public Comment

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