



Mail

PO Box 5310
Stateline, NV 89449-5310

Location

128 Market Street
Stateline, NV 89449

Contact

Phone: 775-588-4547
Fax: 775-588-4527
www.trpa.gov

December 20, 2024

Senator Richard 'Skip' Daly, Chair
Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Skip.Daly@sen.state.nv.us

SENT VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

RE: Consideration of exempting local events from the current permit restriction on the total annual number of events and activities that are allowed under the project permit to take place at the Tahoe Blue Event Center

Dear Senator Daly,

This letter responds to your October 16, 2024 inquiry on behalf of the of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Marlette Lake Water System (Committee) encouraging the TRPA to consider exempting local events (i.e., Douglas County, South Lake Tahoe, and El Dorado County) from the current permit restriction on the total annual number of events and activities that are allowed under the project permit to take place at the Tahoe Blue Event Center (Event Center).

We appreciate the Committee's request and take this opportunity to provide the status of the Event Center Permit and possible exemption of local events.

Summary

TRPA staff presented the Committee's request to the TRPA Governing Board's legal committee on December 19, 2024. In addition to the local event exemption, the committee discussed several compliance issues with the Event Center. A recording of this meeting is available online at <https://youtu.be/vNjk3ig-Zho>. After a robust discussion and public comment, the legal committee unanimously approved a motion *to direct staff to work with Tahoe Douglas Visitors Authority and stakeholders to bring a proposal by the February 2025 Governing Board meeting that (A) brings the project into full compliance with the permit, and (B) considers the request of the Nevada Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and Marlette Lake Water System to exclude "local events" from the permit's cap on the number of events.*

TRPA Legal Committee members expressed willingness to evaluate the local events cap, but only when the permit for the Event Center is brought into full compliance. Over the next few months, TRPA will continue working with the TDVA and stakeholders to reach a resolution on all issues, including a local events exemption. We will provide an update to the Oversight Committee on any actions taken following the February meeting of the TRPA Governing Board.

Background

In November 2017, the Tahoe Douglas Visitor's Authority (TDVA) submitted a project application to TRPA for a 6,000-seat event center (the final project was constructed with a 5,200-person capacity). The Event Center is located at the southeast corner of the US Highway 50 intersection with Lake Parkway near Bally's Lake Tahoe in Douglas County, Nevada. TDVA is responsible for the planning, construction, and operation of the Event Center.

TRPA prepared and released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on January 13, 2020 that evaluated the potential impacts of the project. During the review of the project, staff identified potential impacts on transportation, air quality, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The TRPA Governing Board held a public hearing on January 22, 2020 to solicit comments on the draft EA. At the public hearing and during subsequent stakeholder meetings, public commentors expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of the EA, and recommended mitigation measures and a post project monitoring plan.

TRPA convened a group of stakeholders in response to comments received during the comment period. The stakeholders focused on mitigation measures to ensure the project does not increase VMT. Stakeholder discussions also addressed daily vehicle trip ends and project monitoring.

As a result of these conversations, TDVA proposed transit and parking management plans to lower the likelihood of traffic congestion. Transportation elements of these proposed plans included:

- Free and frequent year-round transit service to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Consistent and year-round paid parking at the four neighboring casinos.
- Creation of a microtransit (van) shuttles program.
- Use of emerging technologies to connect people to transportation, ridesharing, parking information, transit, and alternative transportation options.
- Bus and shuttle lane turnouts and separate areas for Uber/Lyft access.
- Traffic control officers deployed at key intersections during peak times.

In addition to the above measures, TRPA placed an overall events cap of 130 events with 220 event days to the permit.

On March 25, 2020, the TRPA Governing Board approved the Event Center permit. Construction of the Event Center was completed in September 2023, and the Event Center hosted its first event on October 2, 2023. During the first year of operation (September 2023- August 2024), the Event Center hosted 94 events over 143 event days, welcoming a reported 81,629 attendees.

Local Events and Possible Exemption

The Event Center permit treats all events equally for the 130 events per year cap. Since the Event Center opened to the public, TRPA has received requests from stakeholders about the desire to exempt local events from the overall cap. The Committee heard similar testimony during the Interim Session.

Stakeholders have requested that local events be exempted from the event cap for the following reasons:

- Local events arguably do not generate additional VMT or congestion since those events would take place in the community regardless of location.
- Not all local events are large events. The impacts from a local meeting with 15 people are different than a sold-out concert.
- With a cap of 130 events, the Event Center must be selective about programming events, increasing the likelihood of turning away local events that benefit the local community in favor of more profitable out-of-town conferences or musical acts.
- Hosting more local events, such as fundraisers, holiday parties, school recitals, and more, increases community ownership and pride in the building, which benefits the community.

The approved permit allows the event cap to be modified with input from the stakeholder group. Within three years of the Event Center, opening this cap may be modified by action of the TRPA Governing Board. After three years of operation, TRPA's Executive Direct may modify the cap.

While TRPA agrees with the suggestions to exempt local events, there are outstanding permit compliance issues with the Event Center that must first be resolved.

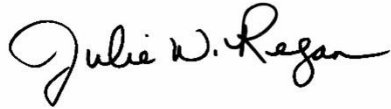
Permit Compliance and Traffic Reduction Adaptive Management Plan Update

The Event Center permit includes over 60 special conditions, most of which have been implemented. Many of the permit conditions are performance-based, including a requirement that the project not increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on both an average annual basis and during peak summer days. The permittee, TDVA, did not implement the full traffic monitoring plan, and as a result, compliance with the VMT permit conditions cannot be assessed definitively. Although the monitoring data contemplated by the permit is not available, the best available data suggests that during the first year, it is unlikely that the Event Center caused an increase in annual trips or VMT. However, there is a possibility of an exceedance of peak daily VMT/trips during an event on July 13, 2024. TDVA has requested that TRPA consider modifications to one element of the traffic monitoring plan to facilitate implementation and bring costs more in line with those estimated in the permit.

The adaptive management plan adopted with the permit includes the convening of a stakeholder group to provide TRPA with guidance on the interpretation of monitoring results and the implementation of measures to achieve traffic-related management.

We look forward to working with you and the full Nevada Legislature during the 2025 Legislative Session. Finally, we will be prepared to report our progress to the Committee during the 2025-2026 Interim. If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at jregan@trpa.gov or (775) 589-5237.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie W. Regan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Julie W. Regan
Executive Director
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, on behalf of the Governing Board

cc:

Senator Melanie Scheible
Senator Angela Taylor
Senator Robin Titus
Assemblymember Ken Gray
Alysa Keller, Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau
Hayley Williamson, TRPA Governing Board Chair
Vince Hoenigman, TRPA Governing Board Vice-Chair